

IN THESE TIMES

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UNSTABLE STALEMATE

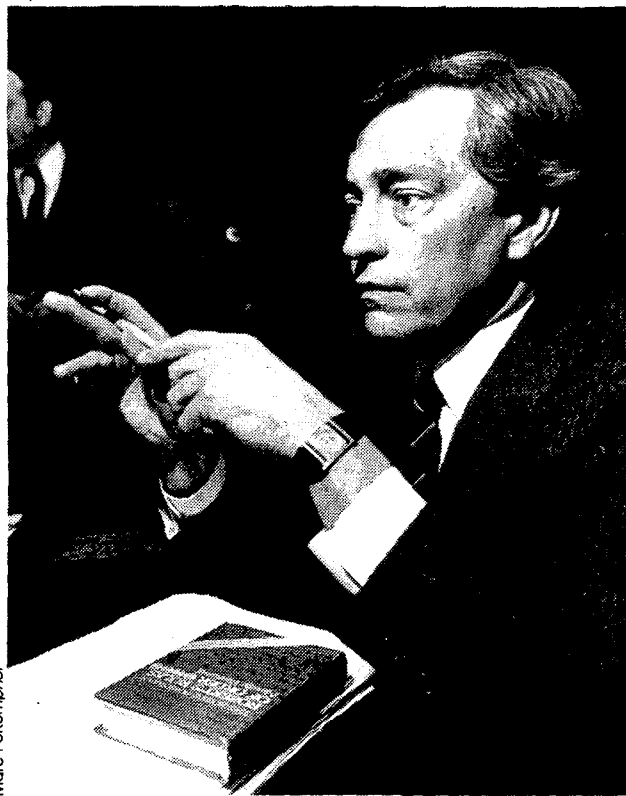
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THE INSIDE STORY



Washington foe Ed Vrdolyak: more questionable deals.

Wheels of Chicago reform turn, slowly, despite council fight

By David Moberg

From newspaper headlines, Chicago politics looks like a "massive sports spectacle," Mayor Harold Washington noted as he released a thorough study of precisely how Chicago's archaic government works. "Vrdolyak ahead. Washington pulling up. Washington ahead. Vrdolyak on the outside moving fast."

Lost in the spectacle of the continuing battle over council organization between Washington's 21 city council supporters and the bloc of 29 organized by Democratic Party chairman Ed Vrdolyak is the root issue in dispute, Washington said: governmental reform.

In order to move ahead with many of his more ambitious plans for jobs, housing, health care and other improvements, Washington must first make city government efficient and manageable. Such an overhaul is equally essential for confronting the city's pressing fiscal problems.

As he tackles city reorganization, Washington is drawing on the volunteer work of a large transition task force of academic, political, business and community experts. The initial appointments have drawn praise even from Washington opponents. So far he has picked several technically competent city workers from the middle reaches of the Byrne administration to head sensitive departments, including the patronage haven of the streets and sanitation department. But he has also appointed newcomers who are both politically committed and talented, such as veteran civil rights and criminal defense attorney James Montgomery, his corporation counsel.

The "Blueprint of Chicago Government" prepared by a transition team directed by University of Illinois political scientists Dick Simpson, a former independent alderman, and Charles Williams, argues that good appointments alone are not enough, however. "The old Chicago government as it has existed the last several decades is completely incapable of governing the city of Chicago," Simpson said. "We have a 19th-century government and set of government institutions trying to cope with 20th-century problems."

This archaic, sprawling, poorly organized and ineffective government—"designed and conceived for the talents of one person [who] is no longer with us," Washington commented—suffers from four glaring weaknesses: a lack of reliable, publicly available information on responsibilities, financing and performance;

overlapping administration without clear controls; absence of clear and coherent specification of function; and a "near total failure of citizen participation," Simpson said.

But there is a reason for the madness. Such impenetrability has made it difficult for citizens and community groups to hold the city and its political leaders accountable. Such disorganization favors patronage and political corruption, since even elementary municipal transactions appear to need special political assistance and special deals can be easily concealed.

"There are politically powerful individuals and groups within Chicago government who reap enormous financial and political rewards from the chaotic, inefficient way in which this city has been run," the Blueprint reports. Although many city employees may welcome reform, "from ward bosses down to precinct workers and captains, there are many people who now work for the city who will view administrative rationality as a threat to their position and who will work hard to resist it or subvert it."

Already Washington has sent special aides into several departments to keep watch—virtually putting them into receivership—pending appointment of new full-time administrators. Aside from the time-consuming task of picking new bureaucrats carefully, the Washington administration has, ironically, also been slowed down by reform. A 1971 lawsuit filed by attorney Michael Shakman, which had already brought restrictions on political firings and requirements of political work by employees, led to an April 4 ruling restricting political hiring.

The Washington administration and the plaintiffs worked out a friendly agreement that would permit the mayor to use political criteria for approximately 930 policy-making positions. But Washington is waiting for the decree to be made final before making many appointments. Attorneys for the machine, who last year were arguing in favor of more than 8,000 exemptions out of a workforce of 42,000, are now arguing that this agreement gives Washington too much leeway, trying to protect their cronies and harass the mayor.

But the Shakman attorneys said that the lawsuit had been intended to prevent the machine from coercing city workers to do political work, thus distorting the electoral process, not to prevent a mayor from having loyal, sympathetic administrators.

Encouraging participation.

The reforms that Washington supports and that the Blueprint suggests go beyond good appointments, an end to patronage and reorganization. Although instituting these reforms could save as much as 10 percent of the budget, Simpson emphasized that the goal was effective use of tax dollars, not budget-cutting. (Washington can accomplish much of the administrative reform through executive order, if the council continues to fight him.)

The heart of the reform package is greater citizen participation, a political transformation that would not only weaken the machine further but also democratize local government. Washington will soon offer a freedom of information executive order, and other ordinances are being offered by several aldermen. "Openness and public participation are the greatest ally of those who want to modernize and rationalize the way this city is being run," the Blueprint reports. "The old practices of making decisions behind closed doors, cutting deals for those who get rich off graft, cannot be dispelled by simply

cutting different deals for the 'good guys.'"

Last week the *Chicago Sun-Times* revealed what appeared to be another old-style deal, pulled off in the last days of the Jane Byrne administration as part of a reelection strategy worked out by Byrne and Vrdolyak. A vision care program was implemented for city employees through National Consolidated Industries Ltd. for a \$2.8 million premium. That firm, headed by several men with mob connections and serious criminal convictions, rents office space in the Vrdolyak-owned building that also houses his ward office. NCI was also recommended by Vrdolyak's law firm to the union at the now-closed Wisconsin Steel factory in his ward. Although NCI was reportedly the low bid, its low financial and performance ratings violated the standards of the city's specifications.

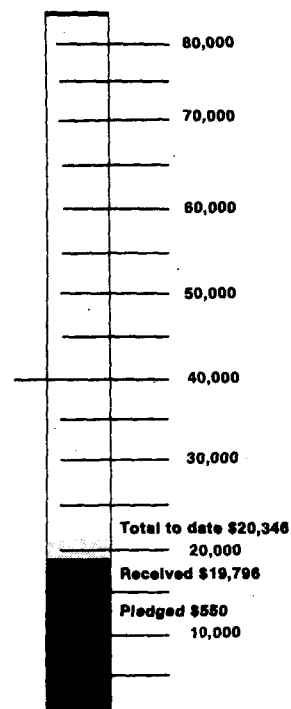
Despite Vrdolyak's denials of knowledge of the company or the deal, it looks like inside connections got a shaky, gangster-linked, poorly performing company a lucrative contract that has served city workers poorly. Investigations into the NCI contract may make Vrdolyak more vulnerable politically and assist the Washington forces.

Washington had already been forced to cancel the annual summer beer-and-music extravaganza, ChicagoFest, because of serious questions about Byrne's accounting of past expenses. Although Byrne claimed that last year's ChicagoFest made nearly \$300,000, Washington says that a fuller accounting shows instead a loss of around \$1.9 million.

Part of the problem in accounting for ChicagoFest costs results from the "creative accounting" used by the Byrne administration. A special "666 Fund" was created, although there were never any appropriations for it (first listed in comptroller reports as ChicagoFest and

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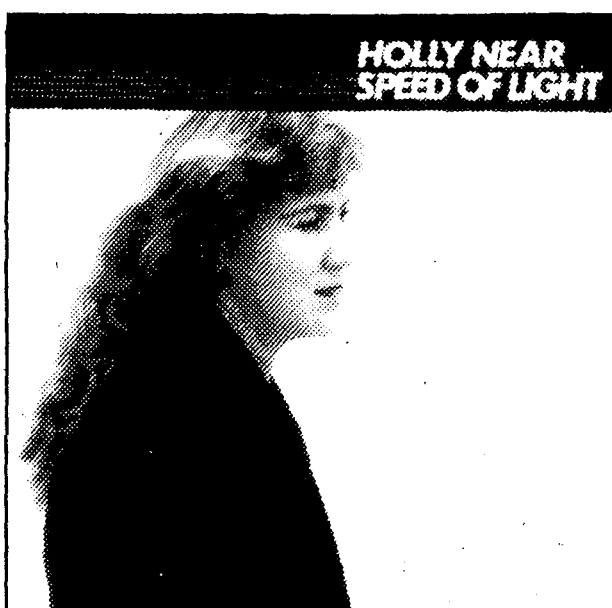
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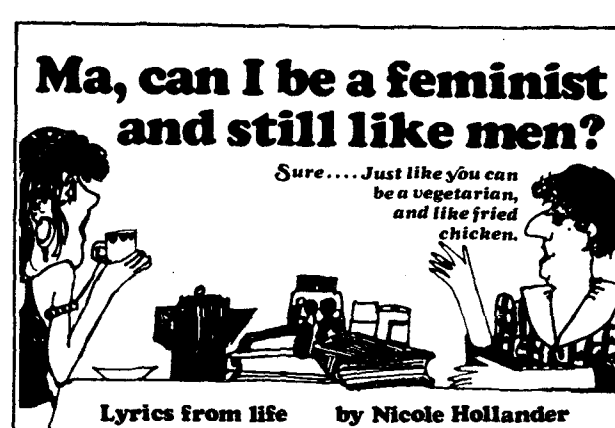
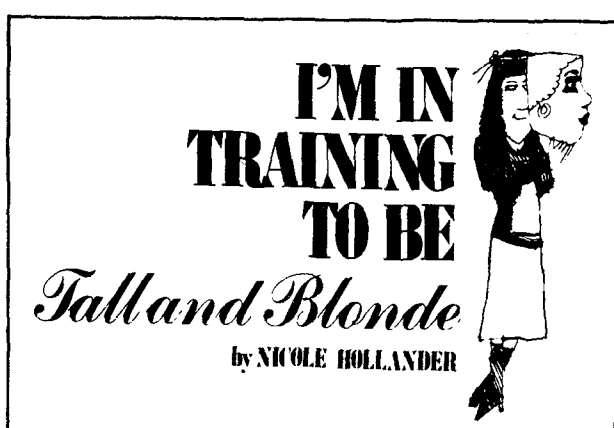
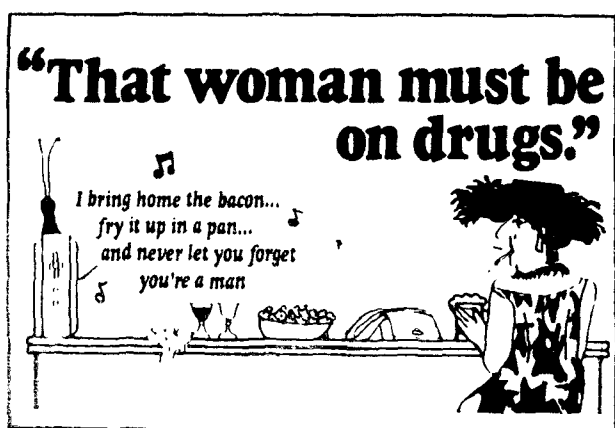
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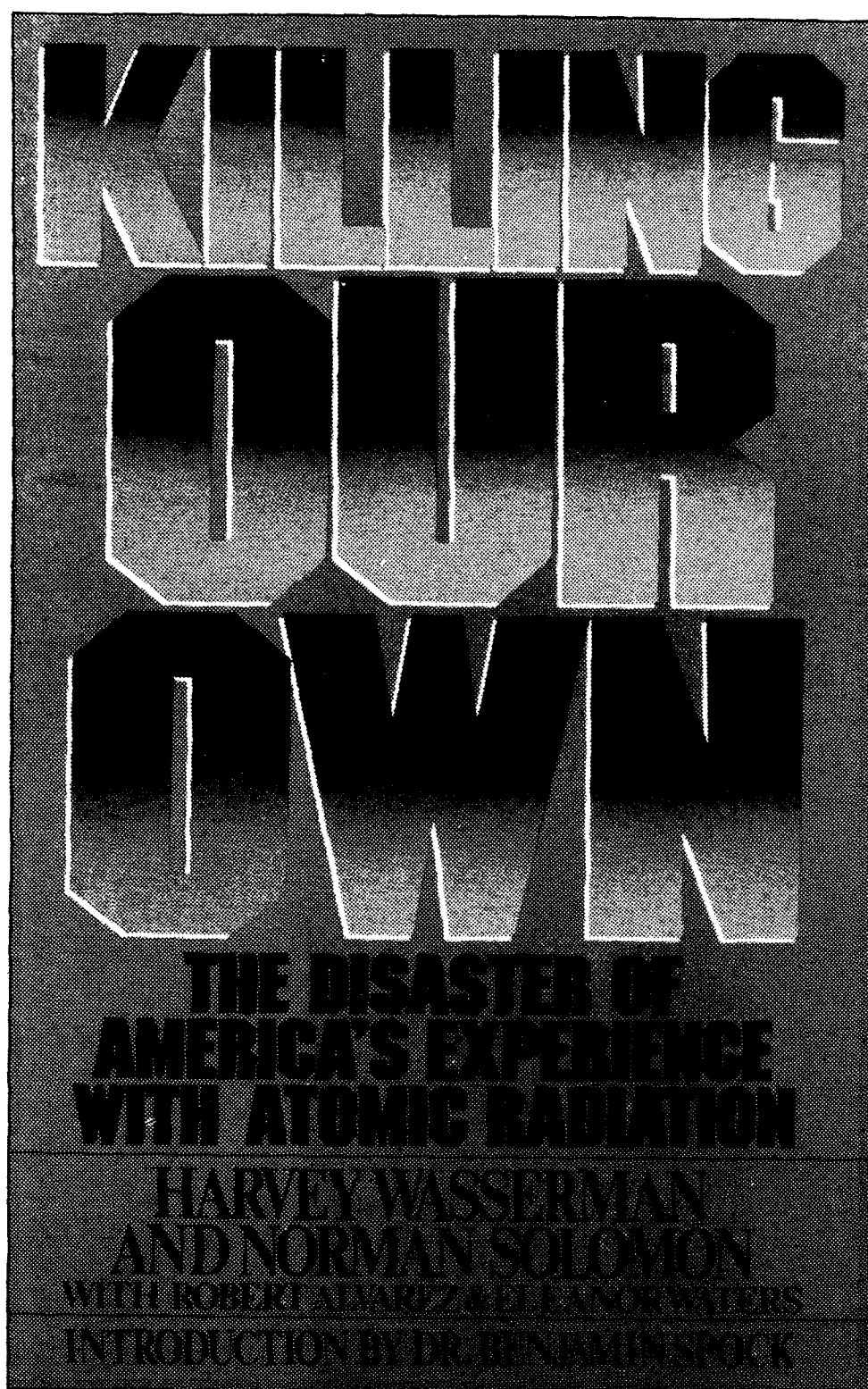
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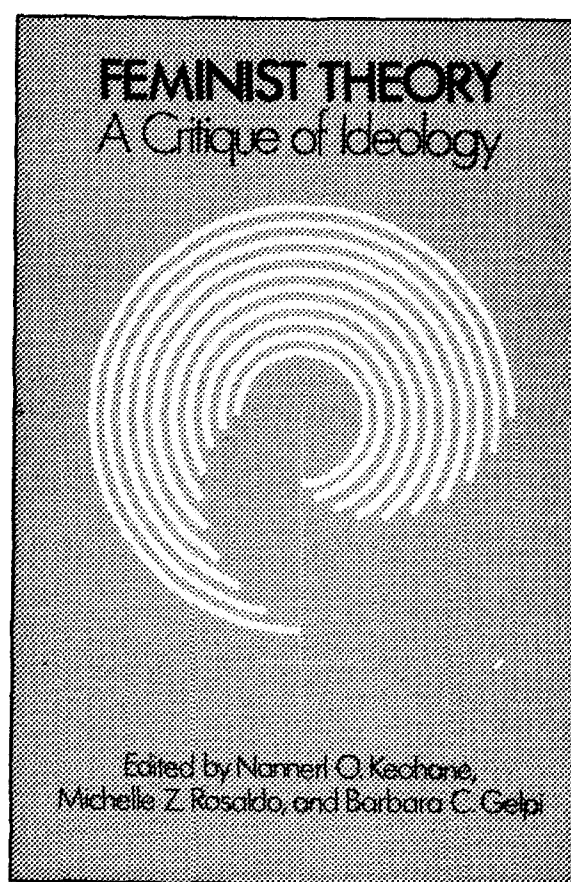
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Nicole Hollander



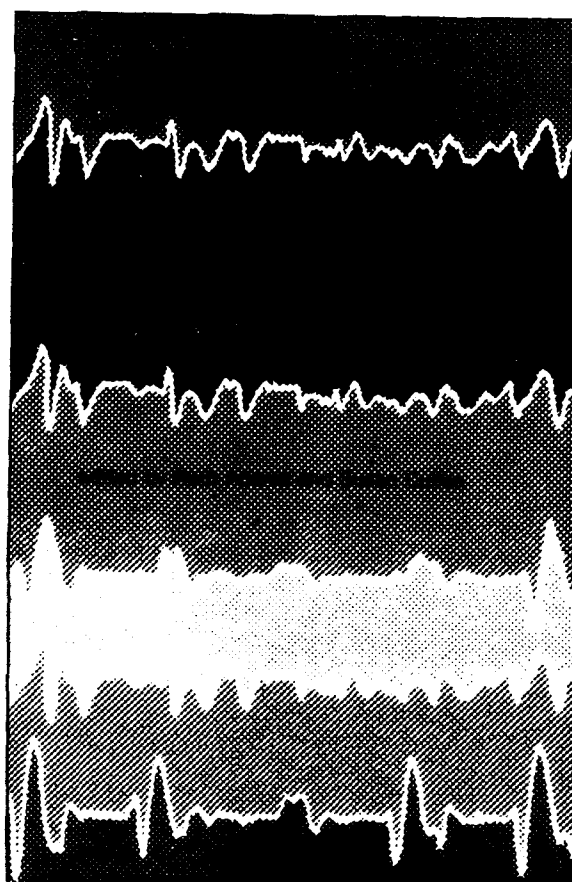
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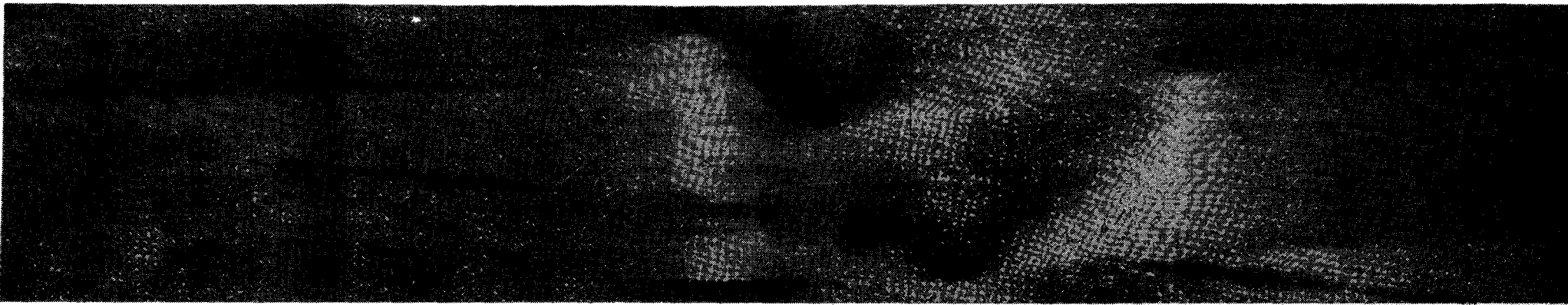
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Did anyone win in Lebanon?

By Fred Halliday

L O N D O N

THE AFTERMATH OF THE ISRAELI invasion of Lebanon last June has shown how illusory the expectations raised by that war really were. The Israelis, pretending the war had the limited objective of "peace in Galilee," in fact hoped to win two much greater triumphs: the physical liquidation of the PLO forces and leadership in Lebanon, and the signing of a peace treaty with the friendly Christian-dominated government in Beirut. The Palestinians believed that their fierce resistance to the Israelis, culminating in the defense of Beirut, had won them a new diplomatic prestige in the Arab world and in the West, giving them an advantage over Israel. The Americans hopes that an ally's victory over the pro-Soviet PLO forces in Syria would consolidate Washington's position in the Levant. The Russians, forced to take a longer view, allowed themselves to imagine that the Arabs would finally learn their lesson—that the Americans could not be trusted and that only a swing to Moscow could correct the Israeli advantage in the region.

None of these neat expectations has come true. The Israelis clearly won some significant diplomatic and military battles, but the PLO remains in Lebanon, as does Syria. The cost of settling in for a long occupation and partition of Lebanon could be quite a high one for Israel to bear. Nor did Israel get its other diplomatic goal in the war: the Lebanese government has concluded a disengagement treaty, not a peace agreement, and its authority is limited to the capital city. And Syria has won new Soviet support and appears to be more intransigent than ever.

Israel's most significant victory may have been inflaming the political divisions within the Arab and Palestinian camps. And it is this bitter fruit that the PLO has been picking in recent weeks, as the revolt against Arafat within the Fatah forces in Lebanon has spread. This revolt has its roots within the PLO itself: the thousands of fighters dispersed and evicted from Lebanon last year have not accepted the import of the defeat they suffered and it is in this climate that outside forces, in particular Syria, have been able to play their divisive roles.

For all its appearance of being an independent liberation movement, the PLO has always been heavily dependent on the Arab states. Thus it has been vulnerable to outside pressures. This dependence goes beyond the normal dependence of any guerrilla movement on the arms and money and facilities provided by outside allies. Unlike other guerrilla movements, the PLO has not been able to build a liberated area within the territories it has been seeking to free. Rather, because of the expulsion of the refugees and the success of Israeli control, the PLO has been forced to operate from and in the territory of neighboring Arab states.

Egypt has not allowed significant guerrilla operations from its territories since the '50s. Jordan was forced to do so in the period after 1967, but in September 1970 King Hussein put a firm and effective stop to that in the massacres of Black September. The PLO was then able to operate from Lebanon: that too has now been severely restricted, and they cannot hit Israeli territory anymore. Even its freedom of maneuver within the Lebanese political system has been reduced to a minimum. As a result—and this may be the main consequence of last year's war—the PLO has for all intents and purposes become a client of Syria. But Syria, despite its intransigent hostility to Israeli strategy, has no intention of giving the

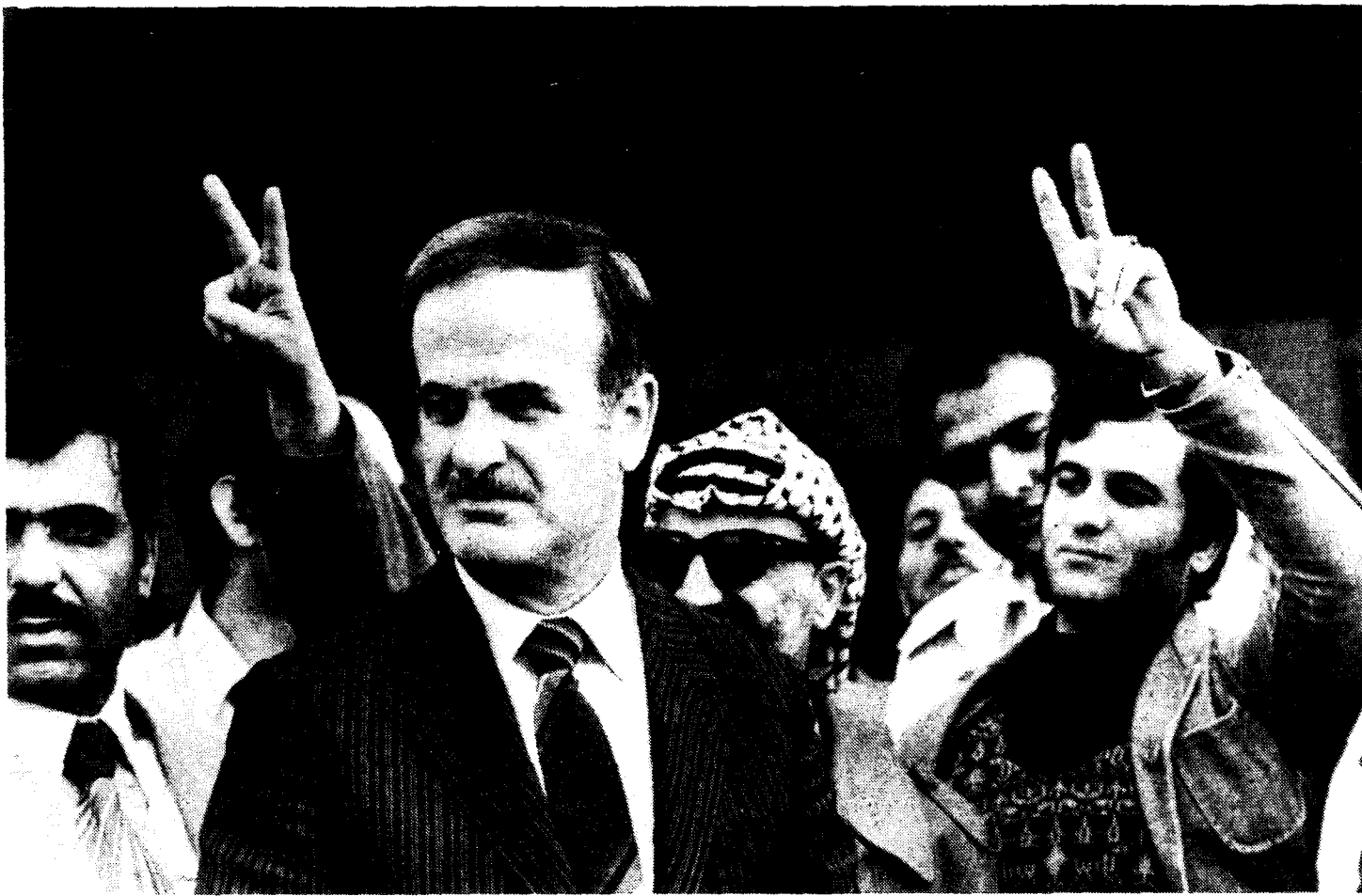
PLO freedom to operate from or within its territory.

Avoiding dependency.

It has taken time for this to sink in: Arafat has long tried to avoid this dependency. He moved the PLO headquarters to Tunis rather than to Damascus last year. He has sought support from other Arab leaders—from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, even Jordan. But the facts of geography alone dictate that Syria must now be the PLO's home and that the Palestinians must, sooner or later, pay the price for this.

The Syrians are not at the moment prepared to cooperate with the U.S. in finding diplomatic solutions to the problems of Lebanon and the Palestinians. It is because Damascus is being offered too little, not because of a lack of interest in diplomacy as such. Syria's President Hafez al-Assad allowed Henry Kissinger to negotiate a disengagement treaty on the Golan Heights in 1974. Nor is it because

Though PLO leader Arafat distrusts Syrian President Assad (center), the post-war PLO is virtually a Syrian client state.



Another separate peace lays basis for Syria-Israel war

By David Mandel

J E R U S A L E M

EVEN BEFORE THE LEADERS OF Israel, Lebanon and the U.S. affix their signatures to the final version of the agreement hammered out by Secretary of State George Shultz, the probable outcome looks even less like progress toward peace for the region than did the Egyptian-Israeli treaty.

Both agreements were sponsored by only one great power, a characteristic that necessarily serves to exacerbate tensions in the region. The "Camp David process" of separate agreement between

of Soviet encouragement to take a hard line: the Russians do not like the way the U.S. monopolizes Arab-Israeli negotiations, but they favor the kind of approach backed by the Arab states at Fez last year, in which troop withdrawal followed by mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestinians could be negotiated.

The Russians have supplied the Syrians with new tactical rockets and have sent up to 4,000 military advisers to Damascus since last year's Israeli invasion. The aid is meant to reassure an ally whose confidence was badly damaged in the war, but also to restrain that ally. The last thing the Russians want is for Syria to get into a major conflict with Israel, which the latter would win and would likely use to press on and destroy the current Damascus government.

The Russians must also be alarmed at the way in which Syria is splitting the PLO: exasperated by the Arabs' inability to agree among themselves, Moscow has publicly restated its support for Arafat. Syria has in the past defied the Russians, while relying on them for arms, and its current divisive role could fit the same pattern.

At the same time, the Russians may have come to the same cold conclusion that many U.S. observers have: namely, that in the end it is states, not liberation movements, that really count and that the PLO will from now on have a much reduced role to play in Middle East politics.

Palestinian split.

The Syrians have long encouraged intransigence within the PLO, enabling the diehards to prevent Arafat from making effective and independent diplomatic initiatives, both before and after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. But last year's defeat has meant that the PLO forces that remain stationed in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley have become wholly reliant on Syrian protection and goodwill. In the recent internal PLO upheaval, the Syrians have kept rebel PLO units supplied with food,

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The PLO, always dependent on the Arab states, now faces subservience to Syria.

an unspoken *modus vivendi* were reached whereby both its forces and the Syrian troops can remain in their respective areas of Lebanon.

In fact, some cynics see such a "deal" already working: the Begin cabinet's approval of the plan was clinched, they postulate, by anticipation that Syria would reject Shultz's plan and refuse to budge, thereby getting Israel off the hook with the Americans. Syria too could then use its beleaguered status to garner more Soviet aid and spoil the momentum of solely U.S.-sponsored negotiations. This would prevent certain other Arab countries—like Saudi Arabia and Jordan—from joining an American settlement for fear that the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its backers would destabilize the whole region if minimum Palestinian and Syrian goals are not met.

The bottom line of such a scenario is stalemate. And in light of the history of the Israel-Arab conflict, this eventually means renewed war. Last June's invasion demonstrated that the U.S. will let Israel fight the foes of American hegemony, under certain circumstances, and Syria is clearly making it known that it will not meekly bow out of its stake in Lebanon just because the U.S., Israel and the Beirut government brought to power by Is-

Continued on page 10

INSHORT

Fair game in El Salvador

Touring the U.S. to publicize the rebel cause in El Salvador, Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), representative Arnaldo Ramos is being frank about plans to continue assaults on U.S. military advisers there, reports Dana Priest. American military personnel can expect attack, Ramos said, because they are "invading troops." The killing of Navy Commander Albert Schaufelberger III represents an FDR "shift in policy in response to increased U.S. involvement." U.S. advisers "are there to teach people to kill, so it's like they were killing."

Ramos was somewhat reluctant to discuss internal tension in the rebel alliance following the killing of guerrilla leader Ana Maria and the subsequent suicide of her companion, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, whose colleague in the left-wing Popular Liberation Front (FPL) claimed responsibility for assassinating Ana Maria earlier this spring. In a Chicago speech Ramos said the prominent female leader was active in promoting FDR unity and that a far left FPL member assassinated her for betraying their cause. Carpio committed suicide, Ramos said, in political protest as well as personal despair, to show that dogmatism will destroy the revolution. But he denied reports that the violence further divided the rebels, and says that greater FDR unity has followed in the wake of the deaths.

Honeywell 36 acquitted

The most recent Honeywell Project trial ended June 3 with the surprise acquittal of 36 protesters charged with trespassing in an April 18 sit-in at the corporation's Minneapolis facility, Mordecai Spektor reports. The trial focused on "claim of right" provisions in the trespass law, with defense attorneys arguing that Honeywell's production of cluster bombs and nuclear weapons parts provided a "bona fide claim of right" to sit down in front of Honeywell's doors. Said jury forewoman Susan Kela: "We were frustrated to find that the law was so ambiguous." She also praised the protesters' "total commitment. I have to give them a lot of credit for standing by their beliefs." Previous Honeywell defendants had claimed a political victory when they received only community service sentences in March, and the acquittals were even more encouraging. The next sit-in is scheduled for October 24.

Three Mile Island blues

Hopes for a July restart of the Unit One reactor at Three Mile Island were dampened May 24 when the staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) announced it can no longer vouch for the integrity and ability of the management of plant-owner General Public Utilities Corp. (GPU). The surprise announcement reversed the NRC staff's previous endorsement of GPU management, Stephen Brooks reports, and could lead to a new round of NRC Appeal Board hearings on the utility's competence. The staff was especially peeved at GPU's delay in turning over two independent management audits, completed in February and March, that spotlighted severe management shortcomings at the utility's nuclear plants. Weaknesses cited in the reports included delayed repairs, poor operator training programs, inadequate supervision and insufficient management interest in quality assurance programs—all complaints voiced earlier by GPU engineers (*In These Times*, April 20) in the cleanup at TMI Unit Two.

Reagan plan flunked

The Reagan administration touts the Chicago Board of Education's voluntary desegregation agreement as its brand of racial justice in education. But Joanna Brown reports that in late May the board charged the administration had "wholly defaulted on obligations" to help pay for the plan and convinced a district court to block federal desegregation expenditures nationwide until Chicago's request for assistance is resolved. A latecomer to desegregation, in 1980, Chicago signed a unique consent decree rather than fight the issue in court. In turn, the federal government promised "to make every good faith effort" to provide financial aid—the Carter administration provided \$2.1 million, the Reagan administration nothing. The school board asked for a detailed accounting of available federal funds and a long-term assistance plan.

ITT veteran makes good

Former *In These Times* managing editor Doyle Niemann recently sent us information about a Maryland city council election—his own. In May Niemann, along with his entire informal slate, swept the council race in Mt. Ranier, Md., in which the main issue was the nuclear freeze. With 72 votes Niemann got three-fourths of the ballots in his small ward, where turnout was 85 percent. He credits a door-knocking, personal campaign for his victory. Currently editor of *Rural America*, Niemann's first task as city councilman will be to grapple with the city's financial straits, a task for which his *In These Times* background should serve him well.

—Joan Walsh



Dems split in EPA win

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Environmentalists won a key vote in the House of Representatives last week in a rare challenge to the House Democratic leadership. Rep. Tim Wirth (D-Colo.) led the 200-167 victory in restoring \$222 million to the 1984 budget of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The battle began when Rep. Edward Boland (D-Mass.) push-

ed a \$1.08 billion EPA budget proposal through his subcommittee on the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Independent Agencies, and then through the Appropriations Committee. The House had voted a \$1.3 billion ceiling in March and the Senate proposed \$1.35 billion. Environmentalists argued that the Boland budget was inadequate, citing an EPA budget review by the Congressional Budget Office that found a "mismatch" between EPA program responsibilities and the resources available to the agency. An internal EPA study found that "the regional offices are drastically short of resources, and at least a thousand employees short of the levels needed to complete their responsibilities."

Opponents of the Wirth amendment originally argued that the cut was necessary because money was needed for low income housing. Unwilling to pit the needs of low income people against environmental protection, the Wirth forces noted that the Boland subcommittee added \$208 million to the \$596 million increase Reagan requested in the NASA budget last year, and the space shuttle isn't planned to house the homeless.

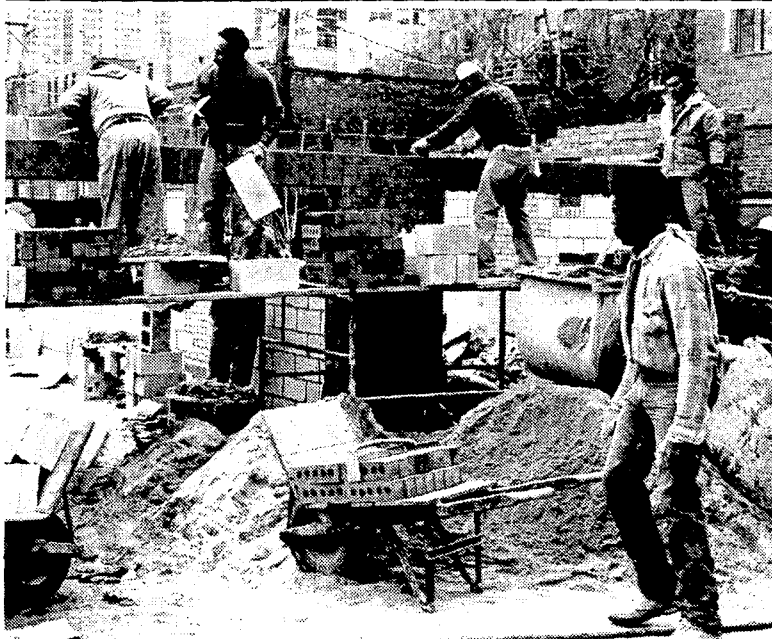
By the time of the floor debate, opponents of the Wirth amend-

ment had dropped the housing vs. environment argument, preventing a divisive debate among House Democrats. But Boland, a close friend of Speaker Tip O'Neill and a 30-year House veteran, joined conservative Republicans in arguing that Wirth was "throwing money" at EPA. He wanted to wait for the new EPA administrator William Ruckelshaus to ask for any necessary increases.

But Wirth, whose amendment had 85 co-sponsors, argued against waiting for the administration to take the lead. Meanwhile, Rep. Mary Rose Oaker (D-Ohio) announced that the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department supported the Wirth amendment, stating that "the Toxic Substances Control Act is important to reduction of risk in the workplace.... Policy without funds is a meaningless gesture."

It was a risky move. Had the amendment lost, the Democrats might have appeared to be in disarray, their commitment to the environment in doubt and their advantage over the Republicans on environmental issues unnecessarily diminished. As it was, the Democratic leadership, including Majority Leader Jim Wright, voted with Boland, but did not participate in the floor debate.

—Fred Clarkson



New firm isn't buying union

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO—When the Bessemer Cement Company (BCC) sold its assets and property to SME Bessemer Cement Inc. in March, it seemed like good news to the residents of Bessemer, Pa. BCC, threatening to close its plant, had cut the workforce by almost half, making the Croatian Club the largest employer in town. But for the members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 2728, it turned out to be just another stage in their fight to save their jobs and prevent the breaking of the union.

After reducing the workforce by 40 percent and demanding—unsuccessfully—\$1 million in annual concessions from the remaining workers, BCC parent company Louisville Cement declared it was closing its plant last October. It announced to the union that all health and vacation benefits for employees, retired workers and surviving spouses would be terminated October 29 and threatened to termi-

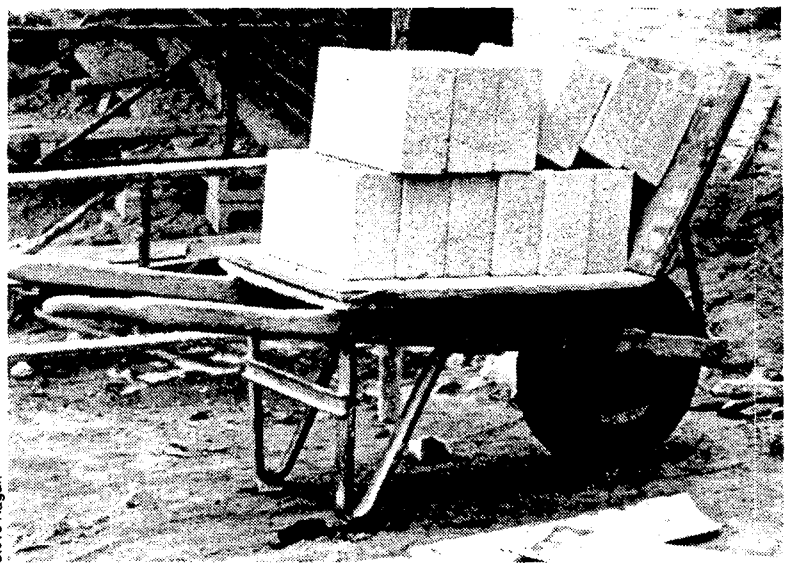
nate the pension rights of all present employees if they fought to retain the benefits. A federal court sent the case to arbitration, and in February the arbitrator ruled that the company was obligated to pay benefits until the contract expired in August 1983.

The March announcement that Louisville was selling out to SME Bessemer Inc. was welcomed by Local 2728. Laid-off local members who had not taken severance pay believed that the new employer would rehire them, since their contract had con-

tained a successor clause binding a new buyer to the union agreement. The plant had been sold twice previously and the employees had continued to work for each new employer.

But SME had different ideas. President Michael Carlow announced immediately after the sale that he had no obligation to rehire former employees or recognize either the local or the collective bargaining agreement. Carlow is a veteran union battler. Just three weeks before the BCC purchase the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that Carlow had illegally refused to bargain with SEIU Local 515 after purchasing another facility and continuing the operation with a majority of the same employees. Determined not to make the same mistake, Carlow began taking applications at the Bessemer facility. Despite union picketing, 3,500 applications were taken for 140 jobs.

SME told employees requesting recall according to the seniority provision of their agreement they could file job applications. To active unionists like Ken Porter, this would be futile. Most recently, while on layoff, Porter was involved in an Ohio hospital strike and arrested three times for contempt of an injunction



Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657. Please include your address and phone number.

and disorderly conduct. According to a report submitted to the NLRB, an SME executive was overheard saying that the purpose of the new hiring procedures was to "weed out the Porters."

Porter filed a complaint with the NLRB demanding his recall rights. His lawyer, longtime labor advocate Staughton Lynd, says that while successor clauses have been ruled invalid where less than 50 percent of the former workforce has been hired, Porter and his colleagues can show that SME has hired new employees in order to avoid the union. Further, the retention of BCC management personnel, the continuity of product and plant operations and rumors of a generous sale agreement have raised serious questions about the relation-

ship between SME and Louisville Cement. Porter's lawyers are asking the NLRB to obtain the sale documents and to determine whether Louisville retained an ownership interest in SME.

In recent weeks Porter's litigation has inspired the USW to seek enforcement of the successor clause in common pleas court, to file an unfair labor practice charge and to submit an age-discrimination complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Of the laid-off workers, at least 100 have more than 25 years seniority. At that age, few can hope to find comparable work in economically depressed western Pennsylvania. As Ken Porter commented, "After all, there's not much hiring going on at the Croatian Club."

—John Russo



Soldiers join arms blockade

CONCORD, CALIF.—Army privates Sharlyn Metzger, 21, and Tammy Partlow, 19, joined a Memorial Day sea blockade of arms shipments to El Salvador, taking off their uniforms to dramatize their objections to U.S. military policy in Central America.

Joining the Port Chicago Campaign, a continuing protest of arms shipments from this San Francisco Bay port where 80 percent of Vietnam arms were shipped in the '60s, Metzger and Partlow left their Defense Language Institute military intelligence training school and climbed into a small rubber raft along with other "Peace Navy" protesters.

"Prostitution takes many forms, but I will not sell myself to the U.S. government any longer," said Metzger after each woman slashed Army insignia and rank stripes from their fatigue jackets with a Swiss Army knife.

Metzger, from Illinois, and Partlow, from Florida, both joined the Army for economic reasons. "It's difficult out there," said Partlow. "The Army promised me \$20,000 after I got out if I could look the other way."

At a press conference at the Central Committee on Conscientious Objection (CCCCO), the two soldiers declared their intent to file for conscientious objector status, then turned themselves in at the San Francisco Presidio for possible court martial and military prison terms.

DLI Commander Colonel Richard James later recommended that they be discharged as "generally unsuitable for military service" under Army regulation 635-200, chapter 13, with no court martial. A decision is pending.

At least a dozen other military personnel have requested C.O. status in the Bay Area this year, according to Jon Landau, lawyer for CCCCCO.

Partlow and Metzger are considering civilian work in Central America to use the language training gained in military intelligence school. —Joan Lohman

Briefing: A bankrupt management strategy

CHICAGO—When Eldridge Kindle left the Wilson Meat Company's processing plant in Oklahoma City to pick up his paycheck last week, he found a new deduction on his pay stub. This one wasn't for taxes or a contribution to a local charity.

Under the heading "Bankruptcy-Reorganization," Kindle's check listed a wage reduction of more than 40 percent—the salary he earned in 1971. It represents an increasingly common labor bargain—a job for a cut in pay.

But it didn't come about because of union concessions to a declining industry faced with increased foreign competition. Wilson, the nation's largest pork producer and fifth largest meat packer, took advantage of a provision in the federal bankruptcy code that allows a still solvent company to file for reorganization and repudiate contracts such as collective bargaining agreements. After the filing, Wilson slashed the wages and benefits of its 9,000 workers by 40 to 50 percent without union negotiation.

The move has been described by the company as unique and creative. Labor law experts have decried it as a perversion of the bankruptcy code.

To the United Food and Commercial Workers Union and its 6,000 members, the move was harsh and unfair. After several weeks of fruitless negotiations, it called a strike June 6 at six of Wilson's 12 Midwestern plants.

Wilson officials say the strike may put them out of business and cost the workers their jobs. The union sees the bankruptcy filing as a strategic move to avoid union contracts and to cover management deficiencies. Why should they accept unilateral wage reductions, they ask, while other creditors and contractors fight for all of what is owed them?

If the legality of the move is upheld, the impact on the labor movement could be enormous. After contending with runaway shops and the recession, unions may now have to face the prospect of rolling back wages or letting a bankruptcy court do it for them.

The central dispute in the Wilson controversy is how an essentially viable company—which Wilson claims itself to be—can suddenly find safe harbor from its labor responsibilities. Wilson's response is that the labor contract is an ill wind. Although it has more than \$60 million in net assets, Wilson claimed it was losing \$1 million a day because of the labor pact and that its labor costs were 80 percent higher than newer and smaller competitors. Bankruptcy, and the resulting voiding of the labor contract, it claims, was the only way to save the company.

The union calls that scapegoating. It points out that in 1981, after Wilson was spun off

from conglomerate, LTV Corp., concessions were made in the master labor agreement including a wage freeze and suspension of cost-of-living adjustments. That agreement was hailed by Wilson as a bright new beginning.

Industry analysts say labor can't be blamed for all Wilson's problems. They suspect that Wilson suffered large losses in livestock trading because it miscalculated future prices.

But Wilson's tactic is gradually becoming the new panacea to protect companies from their own mistakes. Johns Manville Corp. is using reorganization as a tool to shield itself from liability in asbestos-related lawsuits. The Supreme Court may help decide the Wilson case next term when it rules in a New Jersey case what standards should be used in rejecting a labor contract under the bankruptcy act.

Union attorney Peggy Hillman points out, however, that the New Jersey case is far different from Wilson's situation. There, the company was failing and had reduced its workforce by 70

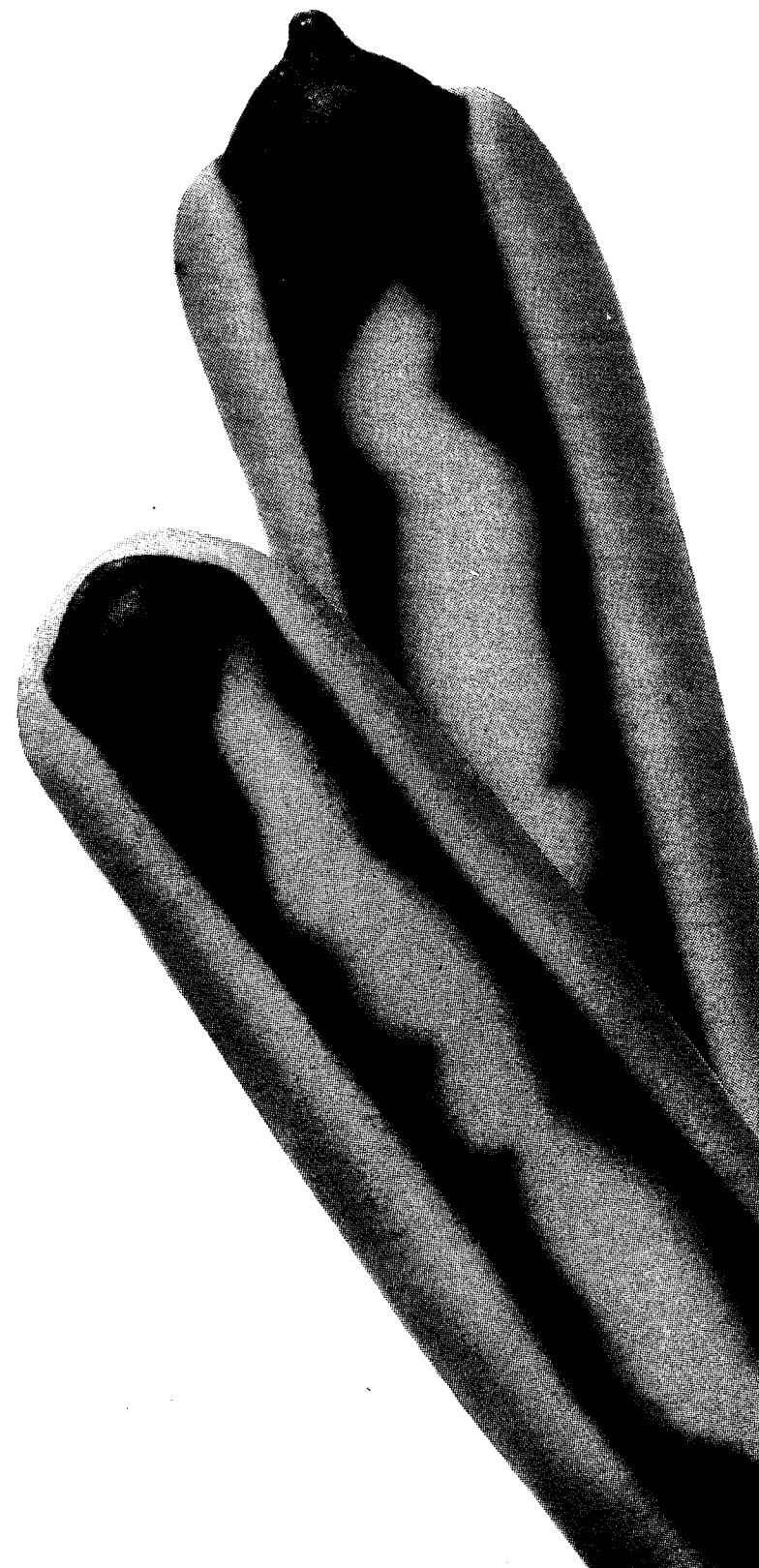
percent before filing for bankruptcy. The union argues that when a company is solvent, as Wilson is, the collective bargaining contract should receive strict protection.

The union has also filed unfair labor charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) alleging the bankruptcy filing is in bad faith because Wilson is solvent and that slashing wages prior to bankruptcy court approval is illegal. Those charges are the basis of the present work action.

While the legal issues are being sifted, management appears to have a new club over the heads of labor. But Professor Frank Cassell of Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management sees the bankruptcy ploy backfiring because of adverse publicity. Both Wilson and Johns Manville have come under criticism in business circles for stretching the bankruptcy laws too far.

Cassell sees the bankruptcy ploy as "a more sophisticated method of what happened in the South when a company went out of business in one state or county and then reopened in another area. It's a very deliberate attempt at union avoidance."

—Steve Vetzner



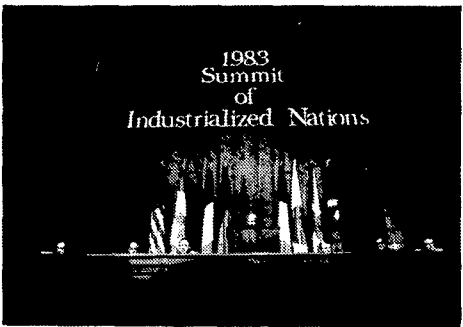
IN THE NATION



The "London-Bonn-Washington axis" now rules the capital roost.

ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Public relations extravaganza hides political farce



By John B. Judis

WILLIAMSBURG, VA

THE WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT May 28-31 was at best a farce and at worst a tragedy. It was a telling demonstration that what U.S. officials called the "London-Bonn-Washington axis" now rules the capitalist roost.

The first summit—at Rambouillet, France, in 1975—was held in the wake of Bretton Woods collapse, and it ratified the current floating system of exchange rates. But the summits have subsequently become media extravaganzas in which the seven leaders address themselves to their national television audiences as much as to each other and in which the agreements reached are largely rhetorical and have no practical consequences.

At Williamsburg, it was especially difficult to distinguish politics from public relations. Media outnumbered public officials by about 50 to one. And the press, barred from attendance at any of the sessions, was force-fed information tailored to enhance the reputation of whichever leader the particular spokesperson was representing.

The most blatant public relations efforts were staged by British Prime Minister Thatcher who faced an election 10 days hence, and French President Francois Mitterrand, whose popularity at home has sagged. Thatcher, with Reagan's encouragement, precipitated the flap over the nuclear policy statement by insisting that it be issued prior to her May 29 departure. She wanted the statement as an endorsement of her election stand.

Mitterrand captured the spotlight three weeks before Williamsburg by calling for

a "new Bretton Woods." Then, during the first day of the summit, Mitterrand met privately with Reagan. According to Mitterrand's own spokesman, the French leader explained to Reagan that he didn't exactly want a new Bretton Woods as such and that he foresaw a long process—perhaps a generation—leading to a new monetary system. When the French press reported the next day—correctly—that Mitterrand was appearing "conciliatory," a government representative chided the press for misrepresenting Mitterrand's posture.

Mitterrand's behavior during the debate over the nuclear statement also appeared directed largely at his home audience. His objection to the initial draft of the statement supporting the U.S. threat to install Pershing and Cruise missiles was procedural rather than substantive. The statement would have committed France to specific decisions of the NATO command structure, although it is not a member. "I was not about to accept an

argumentative guideline proposed by some who would have liked to involve France in decisions that it had not deliberated over, since it is not part of the NATO command structure," Mitterrand declared in his press conference.

Rhetoric and evasion.

Many of the agreements reached at Williamsburg were either reiterations of past agreements or rhetorical flourishes and grammatical exercises designed to hide disagreements. Aside from adding Japan as signatory, the nuclear policy statement added nothing to past declarations and signalled no change whatsoever in the policy of any of the nations.

The Declarations on Economic Recovery glossed over even more issues. The most heated debate had been over high U.S. interest rates; the U.S. claimed its high rates would only come down with recovery, and its allies countered that high U.S. budget deficits had to be reduced first.

In the Declaration, the issue was resolved by conjoining statements condemning high interest rates and budget deficits, but not linking them. "The two thoughts are as close together as they can be without a formal link," one economic official said hopefully.

The Declaration avoided any mention of the issue that might have caused the largest split among the countries—U.S. attempts to limit European and Japanese economic relations with the Soviet Union. The Declaration "takes note with approval of the work of the multilateral organizations which have in recent months analyzed and drawn conclusions regarding the key aspects of East-West economic relations." *Finis.*

At a background briefing in which the participants could not be identified, one non-American official was asked, "In view of the Williamsburg declaration, can we expect no further conflict between the U.S. and its allies?"

In response, the official referred to the way pirates forced their prisoners to walk out blindfolded on planks suspended over the sea, and said, "I wouldn't walk out on that one."

Conservative consensus.

Where the statements of Williamsburg were not empty evasions, they were expressions of a deeply conservative consensus among capitalist leaders. The economic declaration contained two striking omissions: no commitment to increased aid for debt-swamped Third World nations and no commitment to specific measures to reduce the 22 million unemployed in the seven nations represented at Williamsburg.

Reagan himself vetoed any commitment to increased funding for the International Development Association. He told the other leaders that Congress would not stand for it. But there was little clamor from any of the nations, includ-

ing France, for jobs measures. As one British official remarked approvingly, "Unemployment was not given any special emphasis. There was no pressure on any country to take specifically reflationary steps."

The only crack in the facade of conservative unity was created by the discussion of nuclear arms policy. The proposal for a statement had been made by Reagan and Thatcher at the May 28 opening dinner. Thatcher had outlined the points in the statement, and the first draft reportedly reflected her emphasis on the threat of deployment rather than on the promise of arms control negotiations.

The principal objection to the substance of the Thatcher draft was made by Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who objected to its warlike tone. The changes finally made were cosmetic (e.g., "We believe we must continue to pursue these negotiations with impetus [sic] and urgency"), but the seven-hour delay caused by Trudeau's objections eroded at least the appearance of military unity behind the administration's nuclear non-negotiating posture.

But Trudeau was motivated less by principled commitment to arms control than by politics. In response to his agreement to allow U.S. Cruise missile tests in Alberta, a large Canadian peace movement has sprung up almost overnight. By his actions (unmistakably "leaked" in briefings) Trudeau was trying to appease this movement without granting its aims.

The winners.

The Oscar for Best Actor at Williamsburg must be split between Reagan and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. For the last two decades, the Japanese have had the fastest growing major economy in the world, and they came to Williamsburg boasting a large trade surplus with the U.S. and with Europe. Along with the U.S., they were the most likely to suffer criticism from their allies.

But the Japanese comported themselves with dignity and deference. Nakasone was the obverse of Mitterrand. In their statements, the Japanese echoed American assertions on economic recovery and on the dangers of protectionism. During the economic discussion, Nakasone emphasized the need for a study of the effects of biotechnology—a proposal that Dr. Edward Teller might have found controversial, but that hardly caused a ripple at Williamsburg. Presumably as a result of this kind of behavior, the Japanese found themselves almost totally exempted from criticism and controversy at Williamsburg.

Reagan was aided at Williamsburg by the Soviet Union, which on the eve of the summit threatened to install missiles in Eastern Europe if the U.S. went ahead with its plan to deploy Cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe. The Soviet Union's empty bellicosity (they would be as likely to install missiles in Eastern

Many of the agreements reached at Williamsburg either reiterated past pacts or were rhetorical flourishes and grammatical flourishes designed to hide disagreements.

The summit became a media extravaganza, where reporters outnumbered public officials 50 to one.



Europe as they would be to install them in China) nevertheless provided a pretext for pressing forward with the nuclear arms statement at Williamsburg.

Even the seven-hour brouhaha over that statement aided the Reagan administration by preventing the participants from focusing on what would otherwise have been the principal subject: high U.S. interest rates.

Reagan's success at running the Williamsburg summit, measured in part by its amicable closing, will bolster his presidency and his election chances in 1984. Carter's failure to win the confidence of European leaders—principally West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt—did not directly lose him votes in Peoria; but it eroded his reputation among the media and the foreign policy establishment and, as often happens, the news filtered down to American breakfast tables.

If the news from Williamsburg filters down, it will be good news for Reagan. ■

By Dan La Botz

"Before they were working 50 or 60 hours a week and had two loaves of bread under each arm. Now it's starting to hurt the drivers and their friends, all these companies demanding givebacks and takebacks. TDU is saying, if we've got a contract, let's enforce it. Else, why are we paying union dues? That's what it boils down to."

Archie Cook, a truck driver for Scott Lad Foods for 12 years and a member of Teamster Local 705 in Chicago for 15 years

WHILE FORMER TEAMSTER President Roy Williams, the proven crook, fell from power and new Teamster President Jackie Presser, the alleged crook, rose to power, a truck driver named Archie Cook joined Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). That's the big news in the Teamster union.

Seeing the contract crumble and fearing the union could collapse, many Teamster members who for 30 years let Dave Beck, Jimmy Hoffa, Frank Fitzsimmons and Williams run the union now feel that they've got to get involved, because, as Cook says, "It's starting to hurt."

Many trucking companies got concessions locally, according to Chicago area TDU members. For several months companies like Transport Service, Rogers Cartage, Schneider Tank Line and D&L cut wages to \$11 an hour or \$.25 per mile—when union scale is \$13.20 or \$.32. Some companies, like Willett Interstate, have cut wages by changing from pay based on miles or hours to pay based on 23 percent of the freight bill.

"The union's collapsing," says Mike Belzer, tanker driver and a member of IBT Local 705. "They're turning their back on the membership and turning tail on their responsibilities. They're forcing men to compete with non-union labor by dropping their wages below that of non-union labor."

Jack Crowe, president of Transport Service, a specialized tank-haul company in Chicago, agrees that there have been "widespread concessions with the Teamsters." But Crowe claims they often result from, "the men themselves going to the union and expressing their concern

Chicago Teamster dissidents are challenging concessions and pushing reform.



Paul Comstock

LABOR

Teamster bosses hit from all sides

dustries of Montreal, which owns Maislin-Gateway trucking.

The big shippers have taken advantage of deregulation to force down shipping rates, driving down trucking profits. Sears Roebuck regularly gets discounts of between 10 and 20 percent. In some states rates have been cut as much as 28 percent.

Skilling says a lot of business is going to non-union carriers who have pricing advantages. He says the average wage and benefits of union drivers are \$21 an hour, while they're only \$13 an hour for non-union drivers. "What you have is the

tional level, so companies made deals with local unions or with individual workers. The national master freight agreement, which once covered almost half a million workers, now covers only 250,000, and union membership, once as high as 2.2 million, has fallen to 1.8 million, according to the union. TDU says it may be only 1.7 million.

It's mostly small and medium sized carriers who have walked away from the contract, but the industry giants are also finding ways to get around the union. Consolidated Freightways, Inc., owner of Consolidated Freightways Corporation of Delaware, one of the top two trucking companies in the country, is setting up a string of wholly-owned Con-Way subsidiaries that will be non-union.

Jack Burke, assistant director of corporate communications for Consolidated Freightways says, "Labor will operate under a personnel policy different from the work rules that might otherwise be the case under the national master freight agreement." He says wages and benefits, "part of which will be on an incentive basis," should match Teamster wages, and could exceed them. But TDU sees the Con-Way companies as scab outfits and a union-busting scheme. The IBT has done nothing to stop the ploy.

The crumbling contract has forced members who were once complacent about the union to get involved. Dennis Brazinski, an over-the-road tanker driver at Transport Service, a member of IBT Local 705 for four and a half years and the editor of Chicago TDU's newspaper *The Union Builder*, thinks the general downswing of the economy "has made it more essential for rank and file people to become involved, because the union is their paycheck. It's survivalistic. It's very basic."

In March and April Chicago TDU members Local 705 and 710 introduced motions for elected union stewards at their respective union meetings. (Stewards—where they exist—are now appointed.) In Local 705 the TDU motion got 40 percent of the vote, and in Local 710 it got 20 percent. These votes were by division of the house, where members literally have to stand up and be counted in a union notorious for its reprisals against dissidents.

TDU members in Local 710 believe they would have won the vote had the meeting not been packed with retirees

and members of other locals, who aren't supposed to vote, and had absentee votes from 710 members outside of Chicago been counted. Local 710 in Chicago has members from California to New York, with large concentrations of 710 members who work for United Parcel Service (UPS) in southern Illinois, Davenport, Iowa and Indiana.

"It's hopefully a turning point," says Gael Deppert, a package car driver for UPS for three and a half years and a member of 710 who lives and works in Indianapolis. Deppert, vice-president of the Indy chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) who has been involved with TDU for six months, says, "There are so many who shy away from 'trouble makers,' but people are beginning to look for someone or something that might have the answer. And, of all the alternatives, TDU's the best one."

Chicago TDU lost the first round of fights for elected stewards, but plans to organize and reintroduce the motion at a future union meeting. Now they've taken on another issue, the Health and Welfare Fund in Local 710.

"People are furious, everybody's furious" about this issue, says Robert McGinnis, 60, a road driver for Transcon who joined the Teamsters in 1938 and became a member of Local 710 in 1952. The only wage gain in the Teamster contract signed last March was in the cost of living (COL) clause. The entire COL increase, \$.33 per hour, was diverted into the health and welfare fund in Local 710.

Yet with increased payments, the trustees have cut the benefits. According to McGinnis, "They cut the benefits for pensioners approximately 40 to 50 percent and for people who are working about 25 to 35 percent." He claims companies are saving much more on the COL than they are paying into the fund.

TDU is also continuing to fight against concessions, and Belzer says that in some cases "the union, under pressure, has begun to follow us, TDU and the rank and file." Local 705 is now striking E.J. Meyers trucking company for refusing to pay union wages or benefits, and drivers at Signal recently voted down a deal that would have cut wages almost 50 percent.

Elected stewards, the right to full health and welfare benefits, enforcement of the contract rather than concessions—these issues aren't as dramatic as the trial and conviction of Roy Williams or the murder of former IBT Central States Pension Fund administrator Allen Dorfman. Yet these issues make all the difference to the members and the future of the union.

"It's a long war, so to speak," says Brazinski, "I think we will succeed because we have a realistic set of goals: to make the union responsive and representative of the people."

Dan La Botz covers labor issues for In These Times.



Paul Comstock

and desire to help the employer become more cost-competitive with non-union carriers."

Teamsters officials decline to discuss the concessions, but drivers like Belzer say it's not the members' doing. "The union is unable to get the men to agree to concessions," says Belzer, "so they take a hands-off attitude toward employers and individual employees bargaining. They say, 'Whatever the men want at their company is fine with us.'" Individual workers, threatened with lay-offs, are then left to stand alone to face the power of their companies.

Deregulation and depression combined over the last three years to put the hurt on the Teamsters. Since July 1980, 8,000 new trucking companies started operations and some 25,000 expanded service. There's cut-throat competition, according to Richard T. Skilling, president and chief executive officer of Maislin In-

ability of the non-union competition to reduce their rates about 45 percent below the union carriers."

Out of control.

Preoccupied with government investigations of corruption in the union, the Teamster's top officials have no strategy to deal with the crisis in the industry. To many members, it seems the union is out of control.

In March of 1982, the Teamsters gave the employers association Trucking Management Incorporated (TMI) a 37-month contract with concessions in wages—no raise—and working conditions. Several hundred companies refused even that concessionary contract. There have been sporadic strikes to try to enforce the contract, but companies are increasingly ignoring the union.

TMI asked for relief in December 1982 and the IBT turned them down at the na-

Chicago reform

Continued from page 2

later as Special City Programs). Over the course of the Byrne years, preliminary investigations suggest, the fund ran a deficit of \$4.2 million. Money apparently was shifted from the city's cash balance into the fund despite the lack of appropriations.

Purchasing orders were issued by either Festivals Inc., organizers of ChicagoFest and one of the largest contributors to Byrne's re-election campaign, or a public relations firm. Then vendors would take their invoices directly to the comptroller's office, where the 666 Fund was reportedly supervised by a relative of none other than Ed Vrdolyak. Many of the contracts that were issued in this fashion, without any city council review, were extremely generous, inflated by several times over normal costs, and normally let without competitive bidding.

As a result of a lawsuit by the Better Government Association, the city agreed in February not to pay more to Festivals Inc., without appropriations. But the city and Festivals Inc. could be liable to suits to recover the improperly spent millions. Festivals Inc. has nevertheless returned, trying to stage ChicagoFest through the Chicago Park District, which is controlled by machine kingpin Ed Kelly.

Tension between Washington and the Vrdolyak 29 is more than the latter's desire to resist reforms that would endanger their favored businesses or their patronage clients in government. They also fear what Washington might do to them if he played by the old rules.

That paranoia raged through lengthy discussions of the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. In order to circumvent the stalemate over council committee appointments, Washington negotiated with Vrdolyak an agreement for the council to meet as a committee of the whole to consider the \$147 million proposal.

Washington had revised the Byrne plan to shift \$13.5 million into housing finance and rehabilitation, neighborhood business area improvements, industrial street improvements, neighborhood repairs, emergency food and shelter (including day care and battered women shelters) and job training for public housing residents. Extremely high administrative costs were cut back to finance the programs.

Vrdolyak's group wanted to establish nearly total council control over the spending of the money, even though in the past they had given little attention to CDBG spending (and did not even realize

that their proposals violated federal regulations). But Washington administration insiders felt that the Vrdolyak 29 were influenced not only by their ignorance of the legislation but also by their paranoia. They feared that Washington would use mayoral discretionary powers to punish them and their wards as past mayors had done to their opponents.

In the previous year Byrne had shifted 35 percent of the money from its original uses. Indeed, Washington had to visit Housing and Urban Development secretary Samuel Pierce recently with a plea to "forgive and forget" Byrne's behavior. She had spent \$15.6 million more than permitted in "public service" activities as a result of her attempted use of CDBG funds to finance jobs programs, such as temporary jobs, to help her re-election bid.

Eventually Washington got much of what he wanted—council review of programs according to guidelines drawn up by the administration but sufficient flexibility to cover emergencies.

Bad news budget.

The Washington strategy of public disclosure and participation has been extended to the city's overall budget. Another transition team study group revealed its final estimate of a \$138.4 million "shortfall" in this year's city budget. The group estimated that utility tax receipts would be down sharply as a result of the past mild winter, other revenues would also be off, and more than \$50 million in uncovered expenses could drain the bud-

get. Already a hiring freeze, dismissal of Byrne's last-minute, improper patronage appointments, and other economies will save \$20 million this year. The city is still hoping that the state legislature will pass an income tax increase and grant cities a larger share of the revenue, although Gov. James Thompson is having a hard time lining up support from his fellow Republicans.

But serious problems lie ahead next year, when the budget may be without as much as \$106 million in one-time revenues used to balance this year's budget. Also, the school and transit systems each face potential deficits of \$200 million for this year, not counting any pay increase for teachers.

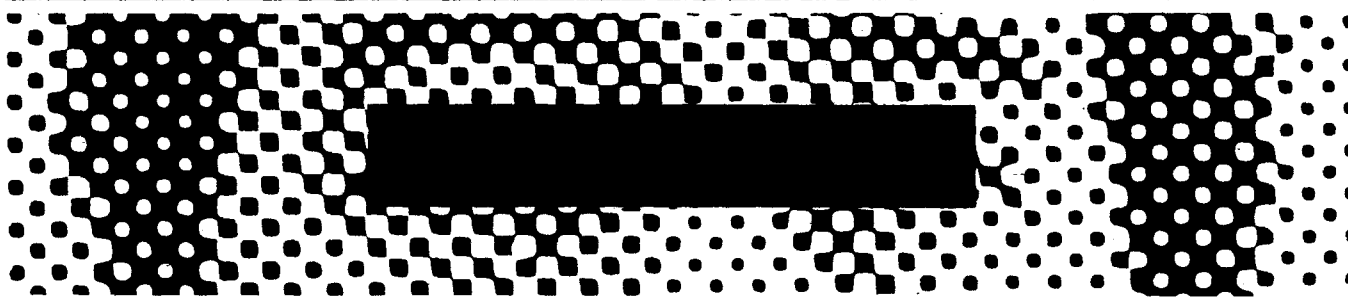
Despite these problems, Vrdolyak recently proposed eliminating part of the city sales tax and an exmployee "head tax" (both of which he had supported) without offering any suggestion of replacement revenue. That would lose the city \$110 million and lead to layoffs of 5,500 city employees, according to Washington, who called Vrdolyak's suggestion the "height of irresponsibility."

Despite the restrictions of the reformers' court rulings, which Washington supports, the mayor can gradually put in place a new set of policymakers and make improvements in city hall administration that will save money, make government more open and responsive, and deliver services more effectively, whatever the council decides to do.

Reform, which in this case means greater democratization of government, ultimately requires political pressure on the council to cooperate, however. Washington may gain points with hostile whites by performing fairly and well, as he has. But he also knows he must take his plans directly to them, and he intends to do so.

But the legacy of racial division will remain difficult to overcome. White aldermen can already excuse their opposition to the mayor as a reflection of the will of their neighborhoods. Reform will mean giving blacks the fair share they have been denied—as established in one lawsuit against the park district that resulted in an inadequate consent decree and another lawsuit still being heard. White support, ultimately crucial for Washington's success, will be even harder to mobilize then. That is, as it was during the campaign, Washington's toughest task.

WARNING!



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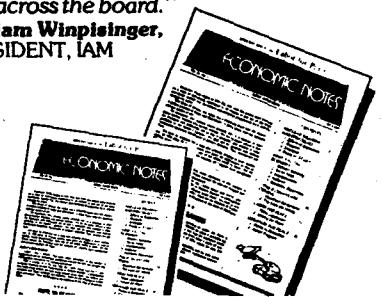
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ARGENTINA

Hope for future, clash on past

By Paul Glickman

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVEN years, the Argentine people can see a possible end to military rule. Mounting public opposition has forced concessions from the government, including a promise of elections later this year and a report on the fate of the "disappeared." But the gradual opening of political possibilities has been accompanied by an increase in political violence against the human rights workers, political organizers and others demanding democracy.

The Final Document on the regime's "dirty war," launched by the military after its 1976 coup toppled Isabel Peron, stated that anyone who disappeared between then and now and is still missing should be presumed dead. Admitting that the military killed people it took into custody, the report acknowledged "errors" and human rights violations. But it maintained that security forces had acted in accordance with the law.

Released in a time of political ferment, the report satisfied few of the regime's opponents. Almost every political party in Argentina denounced the document, because it justified the mass killings and did not provide documentation. On May 5, the human rights group Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo organized a march of 6,000 people in Buenos Aires. Shouting "assassins," the crowd marched to the Argentine Congress. Two weeks later, Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, three Catholic bishops and several political parties led a march of 25,000 people in Buenos Aires, demanding that the government account for the disappeared.

Even the U.S. State Department criticized the report. "We share the disappointment that others have expressed that an occasion has been lost to begin the resolution of this question," said spokesman John Hughes.

While the report on the disappeared touched off a firestorm of criticism, the news that security forces killed two political organizers raised the simmering opposition to a boil.

Newspapers, human rights groups and politicians charged May 18 that two members of the Peronist Party were killed in the town of Rosario after being abducted from a bar by five armed men and shoved into a pickup truck. The deaths of Osvaldo Cambiaso and Justo Javier Correa, said Emilio Mignone, president of a prominent human rights group, "demonstrate that the repressive apparatus still exists."

President Reynaldo Bignone denied the government had anything to do with the deaths of the two organizers. He later supported a police statement that Cambiaso and Correa were killed in a shootout after a car chase. The authorities said Correa used to belong to the Montoneros guerrilla organization.

A few days after Bignone's statement, the government issued a lengthy document stating that the left-wing faction of the Peronists, to which Cambiaso and Correa belong, is a front for the Montoneros, and that the guerrillas planned to assassinate several political and labor leaders. The document accused Peronist leader Vicente Saadi of having "close links with the leadership of the Montoneros," who are supposedly infiltrating other political parties to form a "national liberation front and create a generalized insurrection." Attacks on the Peronists, both verbal and violent, are sure

to continue, since the leftist party is given a strong chance of winning the October elections.

The killings of Cambiaso and Correa followed the May 2 death of Montoneros leader Raul Yaguer, also reportedly shot after a car chase. Military officials said they learned of the alleged guerrilla plans from papers reportedly found after Yaguer was killed.

The fact that the government felt compelled to issue a document on Cambiaso and Correa's deaths, complete with statements by the army, navy and air force commanders, illustrates the junta's political vulnerability. During the "dirty war" the generals would never have bothered

said last October, the courts can't stop government harassment of its opponents. "In this society there are certain dark forces," he said, that maintain their vigor and continue to operate with impunity." These "dark forces" will continue to work, added Ledesma, until "there is a decision by the leadership of the structure from which they emerge."

The economy deteriorates.

Opposition to the military government has been building as Argentina's economy deteriorates. Unemployment is estimated at 16-18 percent, the national debt is more than \$40 billion (10 times what it was when the generals took power) and

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about 10,000 at the height of the repression.

A resurgence of the Argentine press has helped force the military to make concessions on human rights and to call for elections. During the Malvinas war the regime encouraged extensive press coverage of the conflict, although it tightly controlled information. The period after the war, however, is referred to as the *destape*, or unplugging. The papers were filled with stories accusing the government of human rights violations. CELS' Dr. Jose Westerkamp believes the loss to Britain and the subsequent revelations about military corruption left the government too weak to be able to rein in the media completely. "The loss of the Malvinas was in a sense a liberation of Argentina," he said.

But the press is not entirely free. The editor of *La Semana* magazine was forced to flee the country this spring in order to avoid arrest. Periodically a journal will be pulled off the newstands, and several magazines have been closed for months at a time.

Still, the press has persistently pursued the government. Another damaging story heavily covered by the media was the discovery of secret Buenos Aires cemeteries filled with unmarked graves. Some bodies uncovered at these cemeteries had



"Never in the history of human conflict has so much been owed to so...many."

The report on the disappeared and killing of Peronist organizers set off waves of criticism.

refuting charges that leftists were murdered in cold blood.

The killings of the three men are the most serious incidents in an almost weekly series of bombings, beatings, arrests and harassment of human rights workers. Military leaders have created a climate for the violence. Their attitude was well expressed last November by Army Chief of Staff General Edgardo Calvi, who stated, "The subversion is connected to human rights [groups]." Calvi went on to say that "subversives finance everything from declarations and trips of mothers of terrorists (a reference to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) to the permanent publication of biased reports of the war that we all lived."

The legal system is often unwilling—or unable—to challenge illegal government activities. As Judge Guillermo Ledesma

inflation is at 400 percent annually.

These economic woes sparked a renewed outbreak of labor unrest about a year ago. Only nationalist fervor forced the cancellation of a general strike last spring, when Argentina invaded the Malvinas islands just days before the planned work stoppage.

After the humiliating loss to Britain, Argentine soldiers returned home with stories of corruption among the military, and opposition to the government intensified once more. On December 6 and again on March 28, nine million people walked off their jobs in nationwide general strikes. The Interior Ministry admitted that the March 28 action was 96 percent effective in shutting down the economy.

Demonstrations have also sprung up on the outskirts of Buenos Aires and in the country's interior, protesting tax hikes and continued layoffs in various industries. The Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS) reports that soccer matches and rock concerts have been transformed into political events, with crowds chanting "the military dictatorship is going to end" and "assassins, assassins."

The increased public pressure on the government has forced it to release more political prisoners. Fewer than 500 are known to be in captivity, compared with

been shot at close range, and neighbors and graveyard workers told reporters that during the "dirty war" military trucks would come at night and soldiers would secretly bury four or five bodies at a time.

The government has identified only 76 of the hundreds of corpses buried in the nameless graves. But human rights groups were alarmed to discover that only nine of the 76 were known to be missing, raising fears that the number of disappeared may be even higher than estimated. A judicial investigation into the nameless cemeteries has gone nowhere, with the judge apparently accepting the government's contention that everyone buried in these graves died in a "military clash."

The strong public outcry about the nameless graves, the murders of the Peronists and the report on the disappeared reflect a significant change in Argentina's political situation. Demonstrations, strikes and a bolder press are forcing the generals into uncomfortable positions. This "testing of forces," as one human rights activist calls it, will continue up to the October elections. The Peronist Party will be a contender and, unless they start another distracting war, Argentina's military rulers will be hard-pressed to escape public scrutiny and even prosecution for their seven years of repression.

PLO

Continued from page 3

water and military backing and have encouraged them to believe that in the long-run only Syria will guarantee a continued Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

The Syrian move to split the PLO would not have been possible, however, without support from within the Palestinian ranks. It is now evident just how serious the mistakes of the PLO have been in handling their Lebanese role. Before the Israeli invasion, the PLO had antagonized much of the Lebanese population—including the most loyal section of the Sunni Muslims—by arrogant and arbitrary behavior. The PLO rank and file then refused to draw the conclusions of their defeat, and many of them remained wedded to a militaristic rhetoric that in no way accorded with their real capabilities. And, as the February meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers showed, Palestinian divisions on future strategy forced Arafat to outspoken criticisms of Egypt and of the U.S. that threw away much of the diplomatic advantage the PLO had gained in previous months.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon gave the PLO a diplomatic opportunity, limited in scope and time as it was. That opportunity has now been lost. The loss is partly the fault of the U.S., which has pursued a clumsy and shortsighted diplomacy and has failed to win any major breakthroughs, for Lebanon or the Palestinians, while giving Israel everything it wants in military supplies and strategic guarantees. The Arab states have played a role, by their decisions and their passivity; Syria has shown itself to be the PLO's worst friend by demagogic obduracy.

But the tragedy of the Palestinians has also got to their own political leaders, and the factionalism and opportunism that has long beset their activities. It is a cruel testimony to the dead of Sabra and Shatila—by rejecting compromise, the anti-Arafat PLO militants are now doing all they can to condemn their people to another generation of life in the refugee camps.

Israel

Continued from page 3

raeli guns agree that it should. The Soviet Union seems to be placing itself solidly behind President Hafez Assad's challenge.

The detente alternative.

An opposite scenario, however, is not totally implausible. If Syria decides that its chances of dominating Lebanon in the medium term are negligible, it may be willing to settle—temporarily—for covertly backing its many allies there. In exchange for even limited cooperation with U.S. designs, Assad could bargain for backing against Israel's occupation of the

Golan Heights—a recent message to him from President Reagan indicated that such a possibility exists. Syria might then break out of its isolation in the Arab world, a condition that has diminished its ability to influence PLO policy.

The likelihood that this scenario will unfold depends, to a great extent, on the U.S. It will not happen if the strategy of Camp David and the Lebanon war continues: pushing for Israeli concessions only when it helps solidify relations among pro-American regimes, while tolerating military aggression against Soviet allies and other less cooperative parties.

Whether the Reagan administration is capable of such a switch looks doubtful, despite a few winks toward Damascus. Advocates of detente in the Middle East have been on the defensive in Washington since early in the Carter presidency, and ostensibly the U.S. has gained a great deal militarily and diplomatically from the Lebanese war. Most recently, the

been killed since the war's official "end" last September, and many hundreds wounded. Selective refusal to serve in the army has become a socially accepted phenomenon for the first time in Israel's history. More than 60 have been convicted and jailed for the offense, 27 since May 1, and many hundreds more have managed to be "excused" from Lebanon duty by less drastic methods.

Most of those jailed are members of *Yes Gvul* (There is a Limit/Border), founded soon after the invasion of Lebanon by several dozen reserve soldiers. Their original letter to the defense minister has since been signed by more than 1,700 reservists, most of them not previously politically active, and many until recently supporters of Begin's Likud Party, according to organizers.

Growing unpopularity of the war among soldiers has been accompanied by a gradual realization among the Israeli public that even the minimal goals of the

conference of high school students founded an antiwar group and won considerable publicity with its threat of large-scale resistance to military service in Lebanon among 18-year-old draftees. More than 250 have already signed a statement saying that they will not go.

The Yesh Gvul organization continued its barrage of small demonstrations and press releases every time another soldier was jailed. The group was the most impressive contingent at two Tel Aviv demonstrations on June 4. Several thousand supporters of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon demanded immediate withdrawal and called for Palestinian self-determination alongside Israel. Later that day, Peace Now attracted about 20,000 to the culmination of a week-long march from the Lebanese border to Tel Aviv. Despite the organizers' cautious approach, the dominant tone of that rally too was "out now."

The Palestinian issue lurks.

For Begin, there are disadvantages in successfully disentangling from Lebanon. Attention would then again be focused on the Palestinians and the occupied territories. The latest accord does not even pretend to deal with the issue, and if the plan goes through, the Reagan administration would seem compelled to address it next.

Even from the perspective of Lebanon's Phalange, the Palestinian issue presents a formidable obstacle to relations with Israel. First, there is Beirut's need for economic ties with the oil states and tolerable relations with Syria. Moreover, to preserve their form of rule, the right-wing Christians and allies of other sects would like nothing better than to be rid of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have disrupted Lebanon's social, ethnic and political equilibrium. The logical place for them to go would be a new Palestinian state, but that is exactly what Israel went to war to avoid.

The Israeli public has been considerably sobered by the experience. Reflecting widespread public opinion, even some cabinet ministers have stated that had they known the outcome in advance, they would have opposed going to war. The Labour Party is trying both to outflank from the right—arguing that the agreement does not provide enough security—and reiterating criticism of the decision to go to war. A party resolution last week rankled the Begin government by calling for a gradual unilateral withdrawal—coupled, however, with turning all of south Lebanon over to the forces of Israeli puppet militia leader Sa'ad Haddad. Labour leader Shimon Peres is also insisting that the government pursue its proposed southward withdrawal even over Washington's objections.

U.S. opposition to a move that the Begin government may find politically necessary has already cost Washington credibility. Peace Now, normally a cheerleader for U.S. compromise efforts, is pulling no punches in its criticism. "Every additional war victim," the group charged June 5, "is falling for the sake of American interests."



U.S. has argued against a proposal under debate by the Begin cabinet to leave the Beirut area for an east-west line farther south along the Awali river. Even Ariel Sharon favors the plan.

Jerusalem strategists say the proposal would cut down casualties by taking soldiers out of the crossfire between Lebanese Druse leftists and Christian rightists and could enable their army to consolidate its hold on the remaining area, more or less congruent with the 25-mile security zone declared to be the original war aim a year ago. But the U.S. does not believe the Lebanese government or the international force in Beirut is strong enough to take over the region, and contends that Syrian forces or their backers would move in to fill the vacuum.

So now, for the first time in memory, Washington is openly pushing Israel into a more militant position than it wants to take. The Begin government, recently enjoying rare harmony with the Reagan administration, is tending to accede, but it faces heavy attack from the opposition on a politically volatile issue.

The anniversary observed.

One year after the invasion, Israel's continued presence in Lebanon is politically unpopular. Close to 150 soldiers have

invasion of Lebanon, much less last summer's boasts of a "decisive victory," are not being achieved. Direct occupation has not cleared resistance fighters out of southern Lebanon. Syria has been re-armed and still holds as much Lebanese territory as before. The PLO, despite its forced evacuation from Beirut, is still a formidable political force, maintaining the loyalty of residents in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. There have been no rocket attacks on Galilee towns, but the Israeli death toll alone in the war is many times higher than that from all Palestinian attacks on Israelis since 1967. And Israel's international standing is its lowest ever.

The week before the anniversary of the war's outbreak was marked by a plethora of media specials—one normally pro-government newspaper called its anniversary supplement "the war that didn't end"—and an escalation of protest. Two new organizations appeared on the scene. Parents against Silence held a militant demonstration of 2,000 in front of the Knesset building in Jerusalem and mounted a 24-hour-a-day vigil in front of Begin's residence, demanding that their sons be brought home immediately. Defense Minister Moshe Arens agreed to meet with a delegation from the group. A

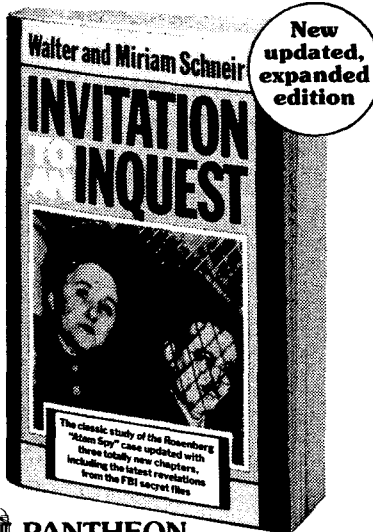
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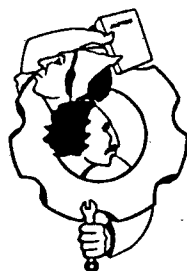
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FRANCE



Defense Minister Charles Henru has drafted a little publicized plan to increase military influence in the schools.

May '83 shares little with '68 uprising

By Diana Johnstone

THE STUDENTS HIT THE PAVEMENT, the cops hit the students. They were at it again in the Latin quarter of Paris. Was May 1983 a "May '68 in reverse"?

That question, raised by some commentators, is most judiciously answered "no." Despite agitational prodding from the far right, the student demonstrations of '83 were nowhere near as large and spirited as '68. More important, the echo in the rest of the population was less significant. A few thousand irascible shopkeepers protesting a government they feared might interfere with their price-gouging and tax evasion could not begin to rival the social weight of the 11 million employees out on strike in 1968. Finally, commentators saw the far right's attempt to use the street troubles to bring down the left coalition government would not succeed.

Moreover, if the media play up similar superficial violence in both cases, the motivations of the two Mays are totally different. May '68 was an outward explosion of students toward oppressed peoples, workers, the world. May '83 is an implosion of special interest groups who fear that the left government may snatch away some of their privileges. The demands of the various protesting groups are mostly selfish and often contradictory. Students who have passed certain hurdles want them kept. Students who have not, want them taken away. They come together in "apolitical" marches to assert their special rights as (in the words

of former Premier Raymond Barre) an indispensable national elite.

But insofar as May '68 was above all an ideological event, the emblematic expression of a period, the very drabness of May '83 might indeed qualify it as a "May '68 in reverse."

As a sort of symbolic climax to the '60s, May '68 seemed to announce that the future belonged to the Revolution. The '70s saw the generation that believed that message get lost, discouraged and divided. Fifteen years later, with the revolutionary certainties swept away, May '83 can mark the final burial of a particular left consensus. The ritual street clashes may help initiate a new generation into a new consensus. It is clear that graduates of the class of '83 no longer feel they have to voice left-wing ideas to show how smart they are. It may appear smarter to be openly right wing.

Gramscian notions of intellectual "hegemony" are largely foreign to the French left, which has always been more interested in state power. And now that the left has state power, the last traces of its intellectual hegemony are rapidly evaporating. The process was well underway before the election of Francois Mitterrand two years ago. The socialist government has proved unable to reverse the trend.

Questionable reform.

The principal target of the student protest is the omnibus educational reform bill introduced by Education Minister Alain Savary. It is less liberal than the reform authored by centrist Edgar Faure 15 years ago in response to May '68. It is probably less reactionary than the various subse-

quent reforms that undermined the Faure bill, but that is debatable. Only Savary himself seems to like it much, and only prejudiced right-wing detractors would dare call it "socialist." It promotes the Americanization of the universities—greater response to the demands of industry, greater professionalization—already initiated by the right-wing governments of the '70s. At the same time, it tries to reinforce the typically French centralized state control. The result manages to displease almost everyone.

While disproportionate uproar and media attention are focused on Savary's mediocre reform bill, other educational policies go strangely unnoticed.

Last September 23, in a ceremony aboard the French navy corvette *Montcalm* off the Mediterranean port of Toulon, Savary and Defense Minister Charles Hernu signed a Protocol Accord designed to bring about what Hernu called a "symbiosis" between the defense and education establishments, the two largest corps in France's heavily centralized state. The Hernu-Savary protocol accord clearly threatens to introduce military propaganda, ideological censorship and recruitment into the schools. But it has been practically ignored.

The accord starts off with a heavily ideological preamble. "The notion of security is indissociable in France from the existence of a national community fashioned by History, animated by a veritable spirit of defense...." The desired "symbiosis" is apparently to be achieved by an ideology that is not noticeably socialist and that revolves around concepts like "security," "the spirit of defense" and "civic" sense, or citizenship, understood as organized, obedient service to the national community.

Despite pre-election talk of six-month military service, the Socialist government has maintained the 12-month draft, with a special two-year service for conscientious objectors. On the other hand, young "creators of enterprises," that is, young men who set up businesses of their own, can be exempted from military service, in gratitude for their social contribution in creating jobs. The schools are now supposed to help instill in young men of more modest means an eager anticipation for their obligatory period of national service.

A National Defense-Education Commission has been set up. One of its tasks will be "to improve boys' and girls' information about the necessities of defense and the final purpose of national service." Will this entail inciting fear of very large units on the map, like the USSR, or of regions full of desperate starving people, like Africa?

The Defense and National Education Ministries will collaborate in developing "pedagogic documents treating defense problems." They will engage in joint "reflection on the various fields that, within scholastic or educational activities, can contribute to the development of the spirit of defense, beyond the simple knowledge of military events and activities."

Military applause.

It is certain that had a conservative government attempted a "symbiosis" of school and army, it would have been widely and loudly condemned for trying to militarize society. But the Hernu-Savary protocol accord has been met with almost total silence, except for discreet applause from the military establishment.

The Defense Ministry has commissioned the Institut Francais Demoscopie to survey educators with a 12-page questionnaire. Teachers are asked which political parties and unions they prefer and what they think about soldiers' unions, disarmament, military service and "the development of the civic spirit in school and in the army." Other questions: "What do you think of the position of the USSR? Do you want France to become a neutral country?"

In historical perspective, this effort to wed the army and the schools can be seen as a triumph of the institutional "left"—meaning one side of the parliamentary

spectrum—over the working-class movement. In France, the left has traditionally been patriotic, with Napoleonic (Bonapartist) tendencies. In contrast, the working-class movement—the original 19th-century socialists and anarchists and the post-World War I Communists—has traditionally been internationalist and anti-militarist.

Hernu and Savary are the direct descendants of the French republican left, not the working-class movement. It is worth recalling that universal public education was introduced in France a little over a century ago precisely in order to instill patriotism and a spirit of national revenge against Germany, which had conquered Alsace and Lorraine in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871. The entire population, especially the little boys, were indoctrinated for the glorious day when Alsace and Lorraine would be recovered for the *patrie*. Maps in schoolrooms showed two major French cities, Paris and Metz, the capital of captive Lorraine. Little boys exercised with wooden rifles.

Protesting students ignored the government's alliance between education and the military.

All this dwelling on the German villains of the Franco-Prussian war was also a good way to repress any memories of the other great happening of 1871, the Paris Commune.

The long-awaited opportunity to get Alsace and Lorraine back finally came with the war of 1914-18, but the slaughter was so frightful that the next generation was wary of militarism. But today, "pacifist" is becoming an insult in France.

The May issue of *Armees d'aujourd'hui*, published by the armed forces public relations service, devoted a special 20-page section to the Hernu-Savary protocol accord. But the general public is almost totally unaware of it.

L'Ecole Emancipee, a libertarian teachers' organization, opposes it. A National Collective of various libertarian and anarchist groups is circulating a petition calling for its abrogation. The petition objects to "growing interference by the army in education, civics lessons based on nationalism, ministerial autocracy" inasmuch as the "parties concerned were not consulted." But *Le Monde* turned down a paid collective ad that criticized the press for failing to inform the public about the Hernu-Savary accord.

Almost alone among the media, Radio Libertaire in Paris has talked about the Hernu-Savary accord. One of the most popular "free radios" in Paris, Radio Libertaire specializes in French folk songs seldom heard elsewhere and in discussions of anti-militarism, labor and the whole range of social problems. It is operated by the Anarchist Federation, which correctly claims to represent "an authentic current of the international working class."

On May 6, the government published its definitive list of 22 officially authorized "free radios." There are radio stations for Christians, Jews, Arabs, West Indians, gays, Solidarity, the official political parties and any number of groups who just want to play music and talk nonsense. But Radio Libertaire was quite unexpectedly dropped from the list. It was the only one that consistently criticized the government's military policies.

French Socialists (and even some Communists) seem to think that flattering their indigenous militarists and supporting Reagan's Euromissiles is a clever and cheap way to construct a shield behind which they can build "French socialism." But the shield may be the only thing they are constructing. ■



By Ellen Willis

IN NEW YORK CITY IN THE SPRING of 1969, a state legislative committee convened to hear the testimony of "expert witnesses"—doctors, lawyers, clergymen—on a proposed bill to reform New York's draconian abortion law. Where the existing law allowed abortion only to save a pregnant woman's life, the reform bill would change "life" to "health" and add a few more exceptions; for three years in a row the Catholic Church, a major political power in the state, had blocked similar proposals. The legislative committee was all male. Of the 15 assembled "experts" 14 were men; the one female witness was a nun.

In front of the hearing room, a coalition of feminist groups demonstrated for total repeal of the abortion law. So-called reform, they argued, was still based on the premise that the male-dominated state, church and medical establishment should control what was rightfully a pregnant woman's decision. In addition, half a dozen radical feminists (myself among them) disrupted the committee's proceedings with loud demands that it hear testimony from the real experts—women. If the legislators truly wanted to learn about the physical, psychological and social consequences of forcing women to go to illegal abortionists or bear unwanted children, we would be happy to enlighten them.

Soon afterward, several of us were among the women who came together to form the radical feminist group Redstockings. The group's first public action was to hold our own hearing, in which women testified about their abortions and about their desperate, humiliating, often unsuccessful attempts to obtain them. It was an explosive, moving event.

That same year, a massive, militant feminist attack on restrictive abortion laws took shape across the country. Galvanized by the radical wing of the move-

ment, it defined itself in opposition both to anti-abortion conservatives and to doctors, population controllers and other lobbyists for "reform." (Contrary to a widespread misimpression on the left, women's liberationists called for "no forced sterilization" and explicitly rejected reactionary arguments that abortion was necessary to cut welfare costs.) Its tactics ranged from street demonstrations, speakouts, sit-ins and guerrilla theater to legislative lobbying and lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of forced childbearing.

This feminist campaign was more effective in less time than any of us would have predicted. By 1970, the New York state courts were scheduled to rule on a suit against the still unreformed abortion law. Faced with a strong possibility that the law would be thrown out, the legislature decided that a permissive law would be better than none at all; New York became the first state to allow abortion for any reason up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. In 1973—only four years after the start of serious pressure for legalization—the Supreme Court declared that abortion was (subject to certain qualifications) a constitutional right.

Partial victory.

The movement's victory was never more than partial. We did not achieve our original goal—repeal of all abortion laws—and the Supreme Court rejected our contention that women's right to control their fertility is absolute. Many hospitals and doctors still refused to provide abortions, constitutional right or no, and some hostile local governments simply ignored the Court's ruling. Neither, of course, was the victory invulnerable, as the ban on Medicaid funds for abortion and other backlash measures have since proved.

Yet viewed in historical perspective, the extent and speed of the transformation in social policy on abortion have been nothing short of amazing. Further-

more, in basic ways that change is probably permanent, despite the onslaught of the right and the current weakness of the women's movement. Even if an anti-abortion constitutional amendment were to pass—and at the moment that seems unlikely—it would undoubtedly be the most unpopular and unenforceable law since prohibition. Too many people, men as well as women, feel entitled to reject an unwanted pregnancy; even the moral ambivalence many express arises in a taken-for-granted context of choice.

Most young women who have grown up since legalization simply don't comprehend the social stigma that surrounded illegal abortion—the fearful secrecy that heightened its danger and compounded its trauma, the contemptuous disapproval of doctors. While women once viewed the danger and humiliation of abortion with fatalism (as they viewed their general condition), legal abortion (and feminism itself) have changed our sense of ourselves, of what we feel obliged to tolerate.

In that sense, the abortion rights movement is a paradigm of the women's movement as a whole. More than any other issue, the campaign for legal abortion symbolized and embodied the political concerns specific to the second wave of feminism, especially its radical wing. In demanding unrestricted abortion, women's liberationists dramatically rejected the traditional definition of woman as womb, as passive extension of the fecund earth. We declared that like men we were human beings with an autonomous existence that transcended our reproductive function. We pointed out the blatant injustice of a system in which men made the abortion laws while women got pregnant and assumed full responsibility for child rearing. We attacked the sexual double standard, the open determination of abortion opponents to preserve the threat of unwanted pregnancy in order to deter and punish female sexual activity.

Finally, inherent in the demand for abortion rights was rejection of our sup-

posedly innate feminine altruism: recognized no special female obligation to be life-givers and nurturers at the expense of our own needs and desires. All the subversive implications of "abortion on demand," this one was perhaps the most threatening to men in a male supremacist society. The thought of "liberated" women pursuing sexual pleasure for its own sake was threatening enough, but the specter of women defining that their purpose in life was to serve others haunted every institution from family and church to corporation. An abortionists' apocalyptic rhetoric of women murdering helpless babies, their equation of abortion with the Holocaust, reflected the fear that moral itself depends on female selflessness. Not only is the autonomous woman a monster, a Medea; her emergence signifies the demise of love, compassion, civilization itself. Behind this fear lies the assumption that the world is a jungle where men are evil and the only redemption the self-sacrificing love of mom.

The cutting edge.

For the same set of reasons, the abortion movement has been the cutting edge of the anti-feminist backlash. The right understands—as the left too of has not—that the rejection of biological determinism implicit in the act of abortion is the moral bedrock of women's liberation. Just as the threat of rape affects the feelings and behavior of women, not just those who are raped but the right to abortion changes the condition of all women—gay as well as straight, those who abhor abortion as well as those who are thankful for it. To refuse to have an abortion now is an act of choice and will, rather than acquiescence to the law and fate. Legal abortion is not just one reform, one new freedom among many; it is a basic precondition of freedom.

Which is not to say that the legal right to abortion—or even "free abortion



NO STONE UNTURNUED

Edited by: Roberta Lynch and Emily Young

This is the fifth in a series of articles on the women's movement.

demand" for all women, still far from achieved—can in itself make women free. Though decriminalizing abortion attacks the ideological underpinnings of sexist institutions, it does not directly attack their structure. One reason radical feminists gave such priority to the abortion issue was that it expressed our radical aspirations while focusing them on a concrete, realizable goal that did not require a revolutionary transformation of society. Repealing the abortion laws did not pose an immediate challenge to the sexist conditions of work and child rearing, did not require basic change in the family structure, did not directly threaten corporate interests or cost the government money. This is undoubtedly a good part of the reason the abortion fight was so concentrated and successful compared to equally pressing items on the feminist agenda—child care, for example.

Inevitably, this very advantage was also a limitation. Many women who were attracted to abortion organizing came to see changing the laws simply as an end in itself, rather than a demand integrally connected to a larger women's liberation program. One result was that the abortion rights movement virtually disbanded after the Supreme Court decision. Radical feminist organizers—notably Lucinda Cislér, a key figure in the abortion campaign—warned that the decision did not invalidate restrictions on abortion. Rather it affirmed a state interest in preserving fetal life and, indeed, seemed more concerned with physicians' right to practice medicine as they chose than with women's reproductive autonomy.

Nor did the decision decisively remove the social and economic barriers to abortion faced by the poor and racial minorities, teenagers, dependent wives or women who live in conservative areas. Cislér and others urged that we not abandon the fight until we had what we really wanted—unconditional access to abortion for all women. In addition to further legal battles, this would have meant challenging the policies of doc-

tors, hospitals and other relevant institutions, confronting race and class as well as sexual politics. Though such struggles were pursued, they did not inspire the unified, single-minded fervor of the earlier legalization campaign and were far less successful. This failure allowed women to be divided in ways the right was quick to exploit by moving to cut off public funds for abortion, passing restrictive local ordinances and making teenagers a special target of their campaign to roll back the sexual revolution.

Childless women:

A more subtle form of opportunism also influenced abortion politics. In this society motherhood, even more than womanhood itself, is a crushing social and economic disadvantage. If a woman is white, middle class, educated and also childless—if, that is, she is free to pursue jobs and styles of life designed for men with no childrearing responsibilities—she can preserve a kind of honorary male status in the world. She won't be treated equally, but she is likely to have more access than the great majority of mothers to certain male prerogatives—achievement, mobility, personal and sexual freedom, adventure, money of one's own.

Many of the young feminist activists who fit this description—myself included—recognized that the tradeoff of children for quasi-integration was no more truly liberating than the deal that had allowed women of earlier generations to have careers provided they gave up sex and marriage. The message was still that the price of even a modicum of autonomy for a woman was to renounce an aspect of her human and female self. Childlessness could never be a genuinely free choice until childbearing carried no penalty. Yet for those of us bent on seizing a bit of autonomy even at a high price, the right to be childless for as long as we wanted—a right only legal abortion could guarantee—meant freedom, a freedom we could grasp here and now,

the most we could hope for short of massive social revolution.

Most women, on the other hand, have children or intend to have them. Most women are either in no position to make the (white, middle class, educated) childless woman's bargain with male supremacy or have no desire to make it. Many women experience motherhood as a form of personal power as well as erotic and emotional satisfaction, the most they can hope for in a world of constricted opportunity. And for most mothers, there is no hope (or illusion) of freedom without profound institutional change. To the extent that mothers and non-mothers alike identified abortion rights with "liberation" from motherhood *per se*, the equation promoted misunderstanding and alienation between the two groups. This hurt the abortion rights struggle and feminism itself, and aided the backlash.

For the most part, black women (and other women of color) do not have access to "honorary male" (make that "honorary white male") status, childless or not. They also have reason to see abortion from a more complicated and ambiguous angle than white radical feminists. A black woman who has an abortion is, as a woman, asserting her freedom in defiance of a sexist society. Yet as a black person she knows that a racist society is not displeased to have one less black baby in the world. And when sexism is compounded with racism and poverty, the right to have no more children than one can afford or cope with has a particularly sharp double edge. Understandably, women of color have been impatient with white abortion-rights activists who equate freedom with childlessness, or take a narrow civil libertarian approach to a multi-faceted institutional problem.

If these criticisms sound familiar, it's partly because the problematic aspects of abortion politics have mirrored those of the women's movement in general; in this way too the abortion issue is a paradigm. The current reproductive rights

movement on the left began as a conscious attempt to deal with some of these problems and promote a radical alternative to liberal feminist pro-choicism. By linking the issue of abortion rights with sterilization abuse, child care and more general demands for economic and social justice, reproductive rights activists have hoped to connect specifically feminist concerns with class and racial politics. As an attempt at forging a much-needed left-feminist synthesis, the reproductive rights movement is historically important. But I don't think it works, either as the model for a pro-woman left politics or, more specifically, as an effective opposition to the attack on abortion rights. The problem is that (like the liberal pro-choicers, ironically) it has played down the radical sexual-political implications of the abortion question.

A common error on the left has been to treat feminism as a series of issues to be added to traditional left demands, rather than as a new way of thinking about politics that requires basic changes in the left's ideological framework. Similarly, the reproductive rights movement has tended to treat abortion as a single issue, one item on a laundry list of social democratic demands, defining it as a health or social welfare measure, like decent housing or hospitals.

But again, the demand for legal abortion is not simply a demand for one more social right. It's a demand that crystallizes and affirms a powerful alternative moral vision—a vision of freedom that not only rejects the oppression of women, but in so doing challenges the entire edifice of authoritarian patriarchal morality, with its values of submissiveness, repression and self-sacrifice. It is this moral vision that the right has equated with murder and anarchy; and it is this vision, I believe, that is essential not only to feminism but to a genuinely radical left. *Ellen Willis is a feminist activist, a staff writer at the Village Voice and the author of a collection of essays, Beginning to See the Light.*

PERSPECTIVES

Attempt at direct UAW election fails

By Paul Schrade

THIS YEAR HAD LOOKED like a good time for the United Auto Workers to give its one million members the right to vote directly for president and executive board members. Doug Fraser was stepping down because of union rules mandating retirement at age 65. There had been a close vote and bitter division within the executive board over his successor. And, most of all, as a new generation of leaders assumed power, there was widespread discontent within the union over the concessions policy adopted during the past year.

But the 2,500 local union delegates to the UAW convention in Dallas in mid-May voted to stick with tradition. Despite the most ambitious pre-convention organizing effort in the history of the five attempts by union members to institute referendum voting, top officers will continue to be chosen by the convention delegates.

There has been no real convention contest for union offices since 1946, when Walter Reuther, then a vice-president, won the presidency in a very close race against incumbent R.J. Thomas. Reuther moved in the next few years to consolidate control of the executive

board. He created a single faction that has since controlled the union. The union's democracy and effectiveness has suffered as a result.

The executive board of the union makes the important decisions, such as selection of the next president. Although their choice is brought to the steering committee of the "administration caucus" (roughly 350 local officials chosen by regional directors and international officers) and to the whole caucus (nearly all of the convention delegates), the executive board holds the real power.

The executive board derives its power from a near-monopoly control over the functions and resources of the union. Top officers have access to all local, regional and national meetings and conventions and to all mailing lists and publications. The union's well-paid staff of 800 is dependent on the board for their jobs, and many local officials have ambitions to get staff appointments. Staff make regular contributions to the board's political campaign funds and organize support for the board's positions.

Potential opponents do not have access to these resources and are usually denounced as disruptive or even disloyal. Other unions have similar structures, but the UAW has always considered itself "the most democratic and progressive." It deserves better.

Many UAW members were stimulated

to push for the referendum now by the example of Richard Trumka's successful campaign last year in the United Mine-workers. The Mineworkers is one of the few unions (along with the Steelworkers and Postal Workers) that chooses its officers by referendum vote.

Referendum advocates criticized the growing number of decisions that are made by the executive board, with only token consent even by delegates. There was no contest this year for the union presidency, even though there had been deep division on the board. Fraser privately organized for Owen Bieber against Secretary-Treasurer Ray Majerus, who was the front-runner. Majerus believed he had 15 of the 26 votes, but the first ballot was a tie, 13 to 13. Fraser had switched the votes of regional directors Ralph Koenig of Wisconsin and Jerry Whipple of California. He convinced two more Majerus supporters to vote for Bieber on the second ballot.

"We keep this thing in the House," Fraser told the *Detroit Free Press* before the 1980 convention. "The whole process is democratic and when it's all over we'll close ranks." But, as George Orwell said,

Delegates at the union convention voted to stick with tradition and reject election of officers by referendum.

"the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is democracy." Despite their constitutional authority to elect the union's executive board, the votes of the delegates were meaningless.

Such centralization of power extends to other issues, further weakening union

democracy. Last year the union did not call a special bargaining convention to discuss its concession strategy, and Fraser and Bieber even conducted secret talks with the president of General Motors in advance of bargaining. The union refused to call a convention to vote on reaffiliation with the AFL-CIO, and Fraser maintained that even the regional conferences that were held were only advisory. In 1973, then-President Leonard Woodcock asserted that the executive board had the right to ratify the Ford contract, even though skilled trades workers had voted against it.

Referendum supporters attacked the board for dominating the convention and giving delegates no choice. They stressed the need for greater membership participation. But they were unable to link any discontent with concessions policies to the referendum issue.

The executive board and the union staff lobbied vigorously. "The referendum frightened the top officers," one international official said. "The whole staff was mobilized to stop it. We felt vulnerable with the split on the board and the criticism of the concessions."

Delegates were told that opening up the election process to membership voting would lead to influence by the media, corporations and other outside groups. Leaders argued that the convention system had worked well and provided good leaders. But delegates were also influenced by nostalgia over Fraser's retirement.

A challenge to executive board domination might have developed if Majerus or Bob White, the Canadian vice-president who had opposed the concessions policy, had decided to run against Bieber. But the "blood pact" among top leaders remained solid.

If UAW conventions continue to reject the referendum ballot, union reformers will have to focus their efforts on strengthening the powers of the various bargaining conventions and corporation councils, making them into true policy-making bodies that also permit the development of new leaders from within the union.

But even if the UAW were to adopt the referendum ballot, the experience in other unions demonstrates that meaningful democracy requires that candidates have full access to union meetings, mailing lists, official publications and other resources. Any candidate who establishes that he or she has a strong base of support—such as nominations from a substantial number of local unions—should be eligible for full or partial union financing of campaign expenditures, which in turn would be limited for all candidates.

"The board has proclaimed from coast to coast the goal of the UAW to expand worker participation in decision-making in the workplace," argued John Melrod, an American Motors delegate active in organizing support for the referendum. "Democracy must begin with membership participation in decision-making inside our own union."

Paul Schrade is former Western Regional Director of the UAW.

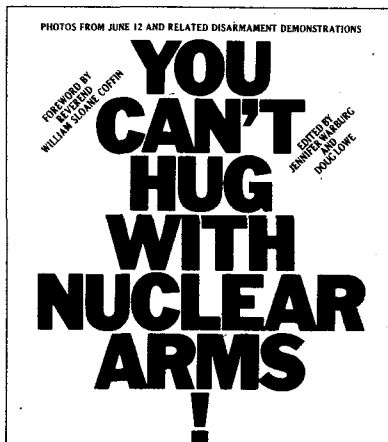
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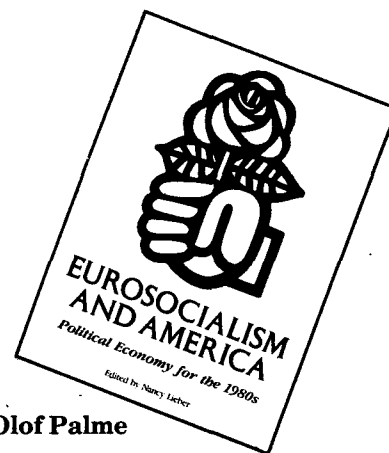
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PERSPECTIVES



"The CIA is assassinating our people," says the headline on a newspaper held by this peasant in El Limon, Nicaragua.

U.S.-armed rebels exact a heavy toll

By Gil Joseph and Ruth Minter

EL LIMON, NICARAGUA

THREE YEARS AGO AT THE age of 10, Maria became a teacher. With other students, she left her home for three months to teach in the national literacy crusade. Now a seasoned veteran, she went this year to the northern war zone to harvest coffee. Maria's brother Tomas is also at the northern border as a member of the Sandinista National Militia. Their mother, back in Leon, directs a tailoring cooperative for former prostitutes. Their father, a doctor, runs a public clinic.

This Nicaraguan family is fully involved in the drive to transform Nicaragua into a country of justice and equity—even for the poor. But the family's situation underscores current reality: Nicaragua is at war, an undeclared war, in which the principal enemy appears to be the U.S. Not only is his young son called upon to fight, but the doctor also finds medicines for the ordinary people he works with to be in short supply because wounded at the front have priority. Maria, too, has felt the impact of the war. Two friends, church workers from Esteli who volunteered with her, were abducted from the coffee groves only a few kilometers from the Honduran border. Two other youths who had escaped from a *contra* camp in Honduras brought news that gave little hope. They reported that the man and woman had been naked and terribly bloody when they were displayed to prisoners as examples of what would happen to those who would not cooperate with their "liberation movement." Friends have little hope that they are still alive.

A host of media stories in this country confirm Nicaraguan allegations that the *contras*—the majority of whom are former members of dictator Anastasio Somoza's National Guard—have received money, arms and training from the U.S., often indirectly through the Honduran military. We saw U.S. uniforms and weapons, which, Sandinistas told us, had been captured from the *contras* on the northern front.

U.S. support of these invasions violates the Boland Amendment passed by Congress and the charters of both the Organization of American States (OAS) and the UN, all of which enjoin our government from attempting to overthrow governments in this hemisphere. These "covert" operations in Nicaragua have been justified by President Reagan as simply attempts to interdict an alleged flow of

arms from Nicaragua to the leftist rebels in El Salvador. But proof of such traffic has never been provided. In any case, the war now being waged against Nicaragua has gone far beyond interdiction.

As members of the recent Carolina Interfaith Task Force that toured Nicaragua April 8-15, we had the rare opportunity of observing firsthand the secret war in Nicaragua's northern war zone, where we were allowed to talk to victims of the recent aggression.

West of the northern market center of Jalapa, a small dirt road off the main artery meanders north to El Limon. Located in rich coffee territory, El Limon's hilly groves lie only four kilometers from the Honduran border. The villagers told us that there was steady work and, for the first time, ample credit made available by the national government. But, they asked, how could they or their children go to harvest coffee when they never knew if they would be attacked or kidnapped by marauding *contras*? Attacks have come more than once, most recently at dawn just a week before our visit. Townspeople estimated the number of invaders as anywhere from 50 to 150. All we spoke to considered them unwelcome.

The *contras* were turned back by 12 local militiamen and nine regular Sandinista soldiers, but the local people live in fear of their return. They feel lucky that so few were able to turn back so many,

Church delegation visits Nicaragua

All of us were struck by the role that religion plays in Nicaragua's new socialist society. Priests heading major ministries and government officials quoting scripture challenged our delegation to rethink the labels the Reagan administration has stamped on this society.

"These people remind me of the biblical 'Ye shall know them by their deeds.' Rather than writing them off as 'Communists,' we should be looking at how they care for refugees, treat prisoners of war, doctor the sick and feed the hungry," said Colleen Alfred, the retired IRS employee who represented the United Methodist Missions from Greensboro, N.C., after meeting with the coordinator of the ruling Sandinista junta.

As an interfaith group, we spent much time listening to leaders and pastoral workers from ecumenical development and research groups, the Moravian Church, the Baptist Convention, the An-

but wonder what will happen next time.

El Limon was not always fully committed to the Sandinista government. Many members of Somoza's dreaded National Guard came from this area and are now among the exiles attacking from Honduras. When a brother or an uncle on a recruiting trip appears in the village with money, it can be a tough decision not to join him. But after repeated acts of terrorism, fewer and fewer in town seem to want anything to do with the *contras*.

Consider Palma, a Baptist preacher. He has four daughters ranging in age from 12 to 22. He was warned that the *contras* had singled them out for abduction, to serve as "their women" and as cooks in the Honduras camps. Palma took the threat seriously and left El Limon, because a Baptist girl of 11 had already been kidnapped while picking coffee during the harvest. Several days later, the child had been found with her breasts cut off and terribly violated. Others from the region confirmed this account and told similar stories to their National Baptist Convention. Such atrocities have cost the *contras* whatever credibility they may have had. Border towns like El Limon seem now to be looking to Managua for protection.

Another town, El Porvenir, is at the end of the road northeast of Jalapa on the Honduran border. The day before we visited, devastating mortar fire from just across the border had razed El Porvenir's rich tobacco fields and the barns drying the crop.

We walked through the still smoldering ashes and twisted roofing of the barn, yet much more frightening than the loss of valuable property were the severe injuries inflicted on workers who had been sleeping in the state cooperative dormitory. A grandmother with an eight-month old infant as well as two other young grandchildren were all rushed to the Jalapa hospital in critical condition. The mother of the children, still shaking, showed us the blood-spattered walls of the house. "I was sure they were already dead; they were so badly hurt. I wanted to die too."

These workers know they are under constant surveillance from *contras* in the Honduran hills at the end of their fields. Trenches on the settlement's outskirts and family bunkers have been dug. But when the attack came, only two soldiers were in the area to help the small local militia confront 200 *contras*. It dawned on us *gringos* that our presence might be all that was keeping the area free from attack that very day.

In both El Porvenir and El Limon, it was clear that part of the *contras*' objective was to disrupt the economy. Attacks have focused on workers in the field rather than on soldiers. Despite the ever-present fear, daily chores continue in the war zone. Last year, with the aid of a national mobilization of thousands of volunteers, a record coffee harvest was brought in. Yet, this year there will be no way to re-

gular and Roman Catholic Churches.

"The government has had problems enlisting the support of the more conservative members of the church hierarchies who feel their traditional moral authority is being threatened," noted the Rev. David Wiseman, a Presbyterian pastor from Cary, N.C. "But authentic religious expression is either there or it's not, and we experienced it time and again."

No one was more deeply moved than Sue West of Greensboro. "Before we left, I was almost embarrassed to tell people I was traveling with a church group to Central America," she said. "I grew up with hierarchy and dogma that only alienated me from the Anglican Church."

"What I found in Nicaragua was very different: a church in which people respected each other as members of a community. Through that community they became empowered; they now felt they had a voice that could be heard, so they used it."

Were we duped? We think not. We made all our arrangements independent of the government, through CEPAD, a Church World Services affiliate. And we weren't afraid to ask tough questions that needed to be asked of Sandinista leaders.

coup losses such as El Porvenir's burnt tobacco. Nicaraguans are even more concerned about an increase in attacks further west on the border near the Pacific, a zone of prime food production.

Sources described several apparent stages in the northern *contra* campaign. First, simple hit-and-run actions were combined with an attempt to recruit or kidnap new members. Next, efforts to disrupt the economy were intensified. Now government leaders feel a new phase has begun in which attempts will be made to seize portions of national territory to use as bases from which to fight the Sandinista regime. Attacks on the Atlantic coast have been more sporadic and are regarded as diversionary.

Former National Guard members who make up the main fighting force of the *contras* include thousands who were imprisoned when Somoza fell in July 1979. They were released by the Sandinistas only to flee to Honduras and be rearmed. Nicaraguan sources testify to capturing weapons from these rebels that were apparently left behind by American personnel following joint U.S.-Honduran military exercises.

For Nicaragua, the cost of the war is not measured simply by the roughly 20 percent of the national budget that goes directly into war material. A broad range of human and financial resources must be allocated to the war effort: medicines, road-building equipment and personnel are all diverted to defense. Relations with neighboring countries are strained, and the energies of a whole people are being stretched thin by attempting to fight the war while pursuing the social goals of the revolution.

As we North Americans came to appreciate Nicaragua's current dilemma, we vowed to pass on to our local churches and communities the simple but powerful message that Sergio Ramirez, the coordinator of Nicaragua's Government for National Reconstruction had given to us: "When a powerful and rich country



Members of the Carolina Interfaith Task Force

thinks a frail neighbor is a threat to its security, the results can be disastrous. We are the victims of an insane policy by the Reagan administration."

Gil Joseph is associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Rev. Ruth Minter is pastor of the United Church of Christ, Indianapolis.

The revolutionary process is not without blemishes. Rationing and shortages of dollar goods have strained relations with middle- and upper-class consumers. Press censorship and the government's admission that it is detaining some political prisoners remain cause for concern.

The Nicaraguan government also has been accused of oppressing the Miskito Indians, many of whom are Moravian. So Moravian members of our group, including Kathryn and Caroline Gramley of Winston-Salem, visited Miskito settlements on the Atlantic coast and put difficult questions to Sandinista leaders.

The Moravians concluded that the Sandinistas had not been culturally prepared to deal with the Indian people. Yet they were struck by the government's candor in admitting its failings and then attempting to correct them.

Opposition to the government does not mean the revolution has failed. To the contrary, the Sandinistas are creating the first Nicaraguan government to demonstrate a commitment to a just and equitable society.

—G.J.
Excerpted from the North Carolina Independent.

INPRINT

MEN

Three decades of the overlooked male revolt

The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment

By Barbara Ehrenreich
Anchor Press/Doubleday
206 pp., \$13.95

By Carolyn Weaver

New Right antifeminists are fond of blaming the women's movement for the decline in traditional marriage. It is feminists' insistence upon women's economic independence, they say, that encourages men to renege on their responsibilities.

But as Barbara Ehrenreich elucidates in her new book, *The Hearts of Men*, it is not feminism but the basic inequality of women's economic dependence that has made marriage such a shaky institution. Any relationship based on one partner's continued willingness to provide for the means of the other's survival is inherently unstable. To survive, women have needed husbands much more than men have needed wives.

Ehrenreich's challenging proposition is that men, not feminists, were the first to rebel against these uneven terms way back in the pre-Friedan '50s. That's when men first started walking out on marriage and male "roles." The changes in cultural assumptions about men and masculinity since then are the result of this revolt as it has unfolded over the last 30 years.

Ehrenreich calls this a book about "ideas, images, perceptions, opinions"; social history understood through popular culture and broad demographic trends. Ehrenreich's sources are bestselling novels, magazines, textbooks, pop psychology and sociology and the movies. By and large, these are the creations of middle-class men—the owners, caretakers and critics of mainstream American culture. She traces their changing ideas about acceptable male behavior, which paralleled—or anticipated—seismic shifts in social relations: the increase in divorce, the increase of households headed by single

mothers, the increasing numbers of men living alone and the increasing "feminization" of poverty.

The male revolt carried no banners. Unorganized, it was only intermittently self-aware and had no compelling moral purpose. Some readers may argue with her terminology for these reasons. Does a dominant group rebel or simply change the rules of the game? Were men consciously revolting or merely bolting?

It was easy to miss the first signs of this rebellion. Misogynistic disregard for marriage as a bad deal for men has long been a staple of American folk wisdom. The early male rebels tended to look no further than their wives for the source of their sense of entrapment.

Ehrenreich is sympathetic to these male rebels' impatience with their double yoke to job and marriage. From *Playboy's* mean-spirited attacks on wives, to the Beats' nonchalant rejection of

Continued on page 22

Barbara Ehrenreich: feminist of many trades

At 41, Barbara Ehrenreich has become a strong voice among feminists and socialists. Her significance in both movements is partly because of her identification with the other: a socialist among feminists, and a feminist among socialists, she believes neither is fully possible without the other. Elected last year to the vice chair of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Ehrenreich makes her living as a lecturer and writer, contributing to *Ms.*, *The Nation*, *Mother Jones* and other publications—both mainstream and on the left. Two pamphlets she wrote with Deirdre English in the early '70s helped spark the then abstruse and quickly growing realm of women's studies—*Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* and *Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness*. The latter became the basis for Ehrenreich and English's widely praised and often used history of the medical and psychological domination of American women, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women*.

Ehrenreich's political involvement goes back to the time she finished her Ph.D. in biology at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. She'd been radicalized by the antiwar movement, and her interest in a career in research science had been replaced by a devotion to political causes. The elitism of the Rockefeller Institute had seemed alien; most of the men in Ehrenreich's family in

Butte, Mont., were copper miners whose politics were Roosevelt Democrat, and Ehrenreich's sympathies remained working class, even after her father's education in metallurgy moved the

family upward and out of Butte.

Instead, Ehrenreich went to work for a radical health research and education group, where she began to hear the first stirrings of the new women's liberation movement.

"It seemed separate, somehow hard to get into," she told *In These Times*. "I didn't understand the issues or know the people who were at the center of it. In fact, I remember being one of

those who said, 'What do they mean, I haven't ever experienced sexism, I don't know what they're complaining about.'"

It was, appropriately, the prenatal care she received at a clinic when she was pregnant with her first child in 1970 that made Ehrenreich a feminist.

"The whole experience was one of humiliation and anger, instead of being exciting and happy," she said. "The women were treated terribly, and it was partly because it was a clinic, and they were mostly poor, and partly because they were women. That made me mad, and then I knew nobody was exempt. I think that's part of the power of health issues, they get across to women of all different backgrounds, classes, races. I sort of thank the medical profession for accomplishing that consciousness-raising very quickly."

Several years later, when she and Deirdre English were teaching a college course on women and health, they grew increasingly intrigued with some of the findings of their historical research, and modestly set out to write a position paper.

"We didn't even think of it as a pamphlet. Then we decided to put pictures in, and then we had a big argument over whether to have 500 or 1000 printed. We were putting up the money ourselves."

Ehrenreich, at home for a few months after the birth of her second child, managed their rapidly growing mail order book business. Advertised in the underground press, orders from alternative bookstores, clinics and health food stores flowed in, and Ehrenreich packed them off in empty Pampers boxes.

"It was exciting because we

had done just what we wanted to do. There was no publisher saying that's crazy or that doesn't sell. I think we would have been very inhibited if we had been academics doing something on which we would be judged academically. It's exciting how much growth there's been in women's history, but it means it's a little more closed: you don't just arrive on the scene with a whole new take on something and print it up and distribute it."

Ehrenreich—who lives on Long Island with her children, Rosa, 12, and Benjamin, 10—is skeptical of the notion of her own self-consequence, or at least of her news value. She also seems to have an ingrained distaste for all the mystifications of professional caste: she doesn't know how to characterize "what I do now." She refers wryly to her predilection for "guessing," and calls her writing a skill, like proofreading or public speaking, that she took up only to advance her political causes.

She is now working with Gloria Jacobs and Elizabeth Hess on a new project. "The book has to do with the connection between sexual liberation and feminism, which is a very tattered, tense, uneasy connection, historically and now. What we're looking at is a women's sexual revolution that has gone on parallel to and sometimes connected with feminism in the last two decades. For example, one thing we're looking at is rock'n'roll-inspired mass hysteria as a beginning step in some kind of women's sexual revolution. The usual feminist interpretation of the sexual revolution is that it was male-dominated, but we're looking for something that was women's all along."

—C.W.



Barbara Ehrenreich calls her writing a skill she took up to advance her political causes.

THE HEARTS OF MEN

American Dreams
and the Flight from Commitment

Barbara
Ehrenreich

*To survive, women have
needed husbands more than
men have needed wives.
The rebellion's unfortunate
side effect was to strand
many women with neither
breadwinner nor job equity.*

FICTION

Mideast and Englishmen

The Little Drummer Girl
By John Le Carre
Knopf, 430 pp., \$15.95

By Christopher Hitchens

Something terrible seems to happen to David Cornwell (alias John Le Carre) every time he leaves England or, to be generous, every time he leaves northern or eastern Europe. Give him a drizzle-sodden English prep school, a gentleman's club in London, a high table at Oxford, a windswept beach or a dripping forest "somewhere in Germany" and he can make a show of things. What he must curb is his yearning for the exotic East, or for anything that doesn't fit the prescribed European categories of the freezing Cold War. *The Honourable Schoolboy*, which relied so much on Hong Kong, was a failure partially mitigated by some doses of colonial British ambience. With *The Little Drummer Girl*, John Le Carre has finally found the point where he is quite definitely out of his depth.

If this novel were a film (and it reads like the result of a script conference with a greedy agent) it would be the sort of movie that one views only on airplanes. The characters are all either clichéd or impossible, the scenery is banal and the moral dilemmas are bogus. There are egregious errors of fact and continuity, and the effort to sustain tension sags into such *longueurs* that it would have any discerning customer tearing off his earphones and—which I've always thought the airlines bank on—calling hoarsely for an expensive drink.

Le Carre uses stereotypes that, when not boring, are insulting to both Israelis and Palestinians.

Despite its excessive length, the book is alarmingly easy to summarize. The Israeli secret service (Mossad) badly desires the death of a certain Palestinian guerrilla. They feel they need two things in order to encompass his undoing. The first, of course, is a girl, who must be simultaneously gullible and plausible—both of these to a degree that tries the imagination. The second is the co-operation of various intelligence officers in other countries—principally Britain and West Germany. It goes without saying that neither the girl nor the other agents should ever know precisely what it is they are being asked to do—but that they should do it anyway. Only the glacially intelligent men from Mossad, plus, of course, Le Carre himself, are ever privy to what is go-

ing on. And sometimes even they—especially Le Carre—seem uncertain as well.

The Little Drummer Girl has been inexplicably praised by some reviewers, and no more explicitly decried by others, for its sympathetic presentation of the Palestinians. In practice, Le Carre deals in stereotypes that, when they are not boring, manage to be insulting to both sides in the Palestine conflict. Thus, Israelis are shirt-sleeved and grizzled—their occasional doubts dissolved with wry humor and ruthless, lethal dedication. The Palestinians are chaotic, colorful, sexually exuberant but liable to turn rancidly nasty at any moment. Since this is 1983, it is of course understood that both groups share a tender feeling for their mutual, twice-promised homeland. Le Carre has adapted various speeches and pamphlets into unimpressive dialog, with persons babbling on at great length in order to show that he has read both sides and is "even-handed."

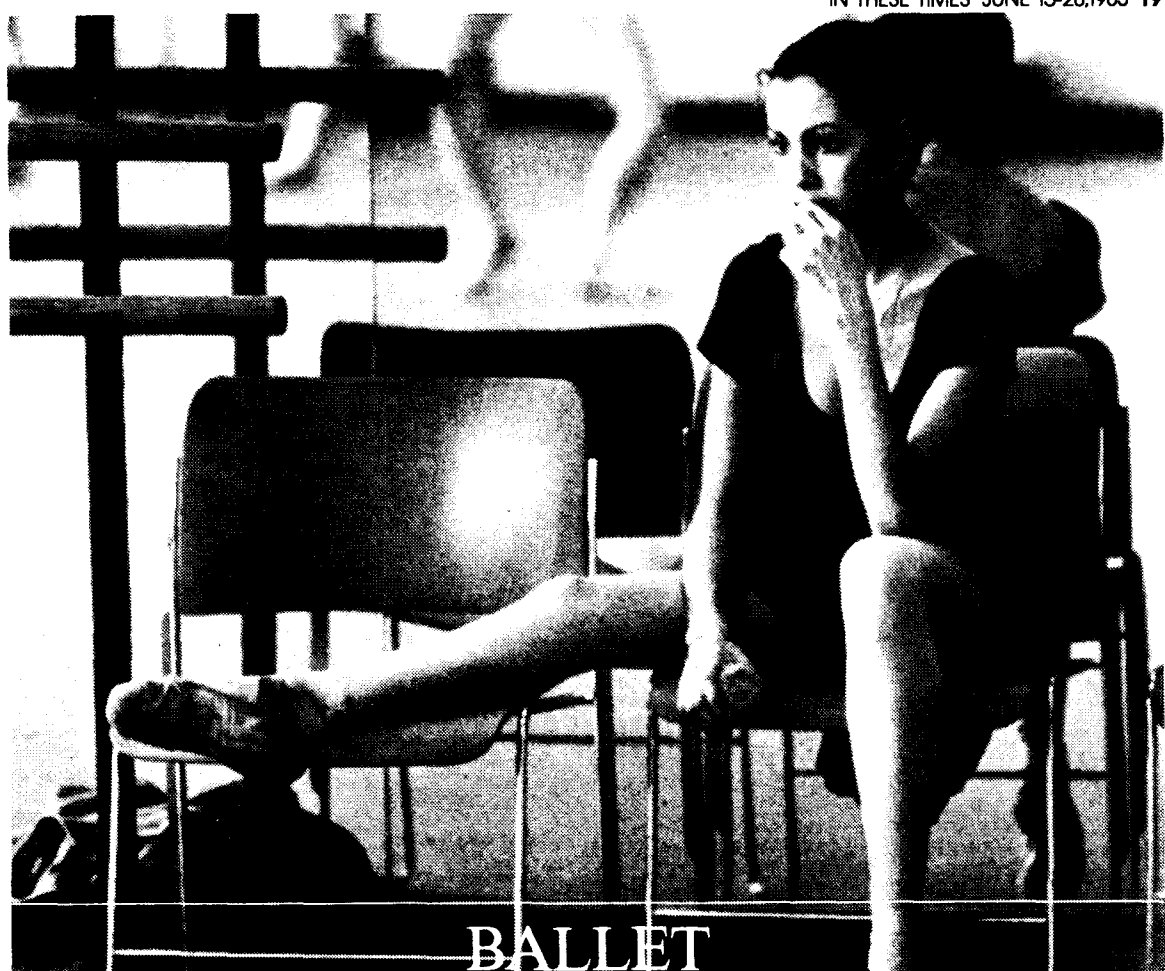
But when he strays far beyond the clippings library he is lost. He has one of his Palestinian protagonists traveling from Beirut to Istanbul and over the land border into Greece. He does it all (before he is daringly kidnapped by the relentlessly vigilant Mossad) on a Cypriot diplomatic passport. Turkey is the only government in the world that does not recognize the Republic of Cyprus. A Cypriot passport is a means of getting unwelcome attention in Turkey—most of all a diplomatic passport. Then Le Carre has the Mossad team receive a telex message from the Israeli embassy in Athens. There have not been, since 1948, full diplomatic relations between Israel and Greece.

Both of these examples are current controversies in the region. They are not trifling by any standard, and certainly not in the case of an author much touted for his mastery of detail.

The slipshod approach to politics and ideas in this book is not at all offset by its characterization. "Suspension of disbelief" may be a necessary faculty in a theatergoer, but modern fiction is supposed to carry a certain conviction to its readers and consumers. In the central person of Charlie, the young British actress conscripted by the Israelis to act as bait for their target (Le Carre uses the analogy of goat and tiger as if he had thought of it himself) he has invented a figure who is literally incredible. Everything about her is implausible; she has no real identity or motivation and it therefore makes no sense for the Israelis (who can command both qualities with ease) to employ her. She is expected to play the part of widow to a man she never met, and we are expected to believe that this man's family or friends never really knew him.

Le Carre here is impartially insulting the intelligence of the Israelis and the Palestinians, as well as that of his readers. Huge swathes of narrative are taken up with Charlie's internal mono-

Continued on page 23



Earl Dotter

Dance their lives away

Off Balance: The Real World of Ballet

By Suzanne Gordon
Pantheon, 216 pp., \$15.95

By Lynn Garafola

"Everything is beautiful at the ballet," sings one of the dancers in *A Chorus Line*, echoing the sentiments of countless Americans who made ballet the fastest growing art of the '70s.

But as Suzanne Gordon reveals in her latest book *Off Balance: The Real World of Ballet*, all is not what it seems from the other side of the footlights. This unique study of the life of the average dancer from professional school through retirement will win its author few friends in the ballet establishment. And it will shock many fans, unaware of the toll exacted from their favorite performers in the name of art. The reader of Gordon's scathing expose of the country's leading ballet institutions can only conclude that a full-scale inquiry into their practices is urgently needed.

The book grew out of a "labor story" for *Geo* magazine about the American Ballet Theatre lockout in 1979. But in the course of interviewing more than 100 students, dancers, ballet mothers, teachers and choreographers—whose voices tell the book's appalling tale of anorexia, loss of self, injuries and savage competition—Gordon "began to feel [the] sense of outrage" that charges this well-written book.

She begins by looking at the elite professional schools where young girls spend up to 10 years mastering the arduous technique of ballet. With close attention, she examines the practices of the School of American Ballet (SAB), which, as the feeder academy of the New York City Ballet, sets the standards of technique, "look" and style, emulated by schools around the country.

Off Balance paints a grim picture of competition at SAB, where students vie against overwhelming odds for the one or two yearly openings in the parent company. "At all schools," writes Gordon, "a large number of students wait anxiously for the

unlikely to occur." But at SAB, where lack of guidance, counseling, medical services and interest in all but technical progress is justified as "toughening" students for the real world of ballet; competition robs even the most promising students of body, intellect, self-esteem and love of dance.

With so many more girls than boys in the classroom, competition hits girls hardest. They drive themselves in class, "dance through" injuries and diet relentlessly. Rivalry poisons friendships and mistrust greets a teacher's rare word of praise. At SAB, girls spend their teens in emotional isolation and even terror, comforted only by the inevitable "ballet mother" who urges them on.

Today's "ballet mother" typically hails from the suburban heartland. Married and middle class, she yokes her own unfulfilled ambition to her daughter's talent, and with daddy footing the \$78,000 bill (Gordon's estimate of the total cost of training), sets out for New York with her young dancer. She views the abuses her child suffers as a necessary passage to greatness.

For many young dancers, Mom is the best friend that they never find in their peer group, and many live with their mothers until well into their 30s. Infantilizing and symbiotic, these relationships play into the hands of schools like SAB that offer little scholarship money to girls and have no residence facilities for out-of-town students. They also provide the model for the dancer's relationship with the successive parental surrogates—teacher, balletmaster, choreographer—who mold her career, and the companies that employ her. Even as adults, writes Gordon, dancers remain "tied to their companies in a quasi-parental relationship."

Ultra-slimness ideals.

The most harrowing pages of *Off Balance* concern anorexia. In ballet, where ultra-slimness is today's female ideal, the disease is rampant. At "weigh-ins" teachers humiliate girls by announcing "extra" poundage while talk of diets and bingeing is a staple of dressing-room conversation.

With thinness yet another form of competition, girls starve, purge and force themselves to vomit to rid their bodies of flesh.

"It is hard," writes Gordon, "to watch young students who look like skeletons dance across the floor while parents, teachers and observers sit measuring technique, so mesmerized by the prospects of future glamour and glory that they are oblivious to the simple fact that they aren't just dancers, they're children, abused children, who are so thin they can barely make it through the day." When a girl becomes anorexic, the school sends her home to "fatten up."

Gordon comes down hard on the school and company administrators responsible for such practices. SAB president Lincoln Kirstein, however, gets off lightly. This is unfortunate because in the past four decades this heir to the Filene department store fortune has done more to institutionalize ballet training in the U.S. than anyone save the beneficiary of his largesse, the late choreographer George Balanchine.

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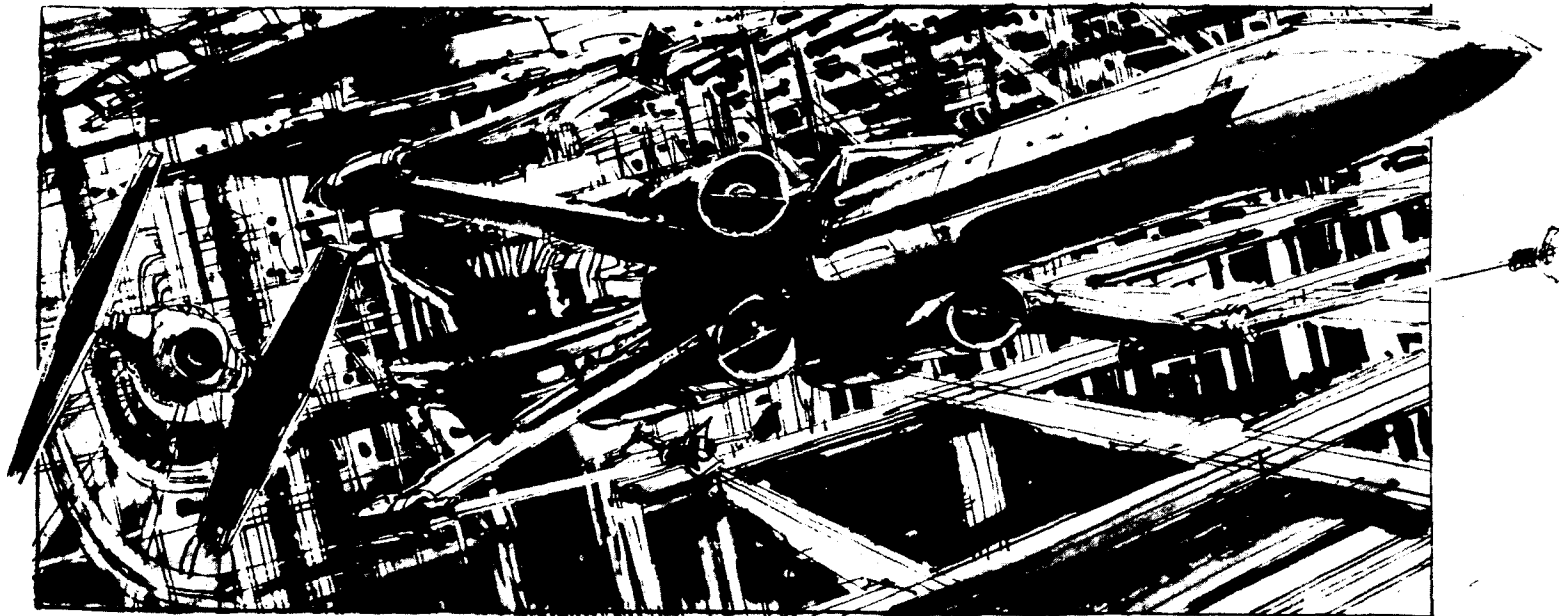
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ART«»ENTERTAINMENT

STAR WARS

Third time is less of a charm



By Pat Aufderheide

Return of the Jedi, the conclusion of the *Star Wars* trilogy, broke box office records its first week out, and it looks like a long summer. But at the risk of sounding Grinchlike, let me suggest that it's proof you can have too much of a good thing.

Mechanical excellence without

enthusiasm marks this enterprise—it's full of overbuilt, characterless creatures. In the two earlier *Star Wars* movies, machines had the personality—C-3PO and R2-D2 offered a comic human touch among a cast of cardboard superheroes. Now even they have turned into icons—too many *Star Wars* toy spinoffs, maybe—and the liveliest new addition is a hideous salamander-like creature

that plays sycophant to the evil emperor Jabba the Hutt.

Oh, there's plenty of action in *Jedi*, from the outset. In setup after setup, you witness *tour de force* scene setting, creature design and pyrotechnics as the freedom fighters led by Luke (Mark Hamill), Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher), Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Lando Calrissian (Billy Dee Williams) battle it out

with the imperialists, exemplified by Darth Vader (the voice of James Earl Jones, the body of David Prowse). Having rescued Han from Jabba's palace, the good guys set off to destroy the Death Star, the empire's ultimate weapon. They fight the bad guys in space, in a forest world (with the help of koala bear-like "furballs" called Ewoks) and finally in the Death Star itself. Plot kick-

ers involve the identity of Princess Leia and the true quality of Darth Vader's soul.

Pop imagery.

In *Jedi*, Lucasfilm's attention was poured into the special effects, meant both to outdo the wonders of the first two films and to generate even more spinoff toys and emblems. The result is impressive and ingenious. None of the imaginary creatures or settings is a flight of pure fancy; they all play with popular imagery. Take the pit into which Our Heroes are almost thrown—a vagina with teeth if I ever saw one. Jabba's palace is a study in our attitudes toward the world we label Oriental. The potentate looks like a cross between a frog and a hookah; Leia is forced to dress as a harem girl; the palace is full of leering lunkies and torturers.

These movie model builders also play, in ways that would delight Stephen Jay Gould, with our associations with the animal kingdom. They not only exploit our positive identifications toward furry cuddly creatures with the Ewoks, and our negative connotations with slimy and scaly reptiles, but they also make surprising and clever switches. Some of the cool, contained technicians among the good guys have insect eyes and fish mouths, along with touches that connote intelligence such as high foreheads.

Computerized bad guys.

Lucasfilm's engineering wizards have their cake and eat it too—they get to turn the serious business of our society into fantasy. (Their special effects shop name

Kid pix

Continued from page 24

C-3PO), Wookies (Chewbacca) and other fantastic creatures. (Like the computer HAL in Kubrick's *2001*, they had more personality than the people.)

Perhaps Lucas' imagination was nostalgic for feudalism and a servant class, but he also knew how to mobilize the money and technology that made the special effects so striking. When the mercenary adventurer Han Solo's ship goes into "hyperspace," or overdrive, the kid in all of us goes zooming through the meteor fields.

With its endless astral dog-fights (made possible by computer-guided cameras), *Star Wars* was a triumph of special effects over human effects. It had a more salutary impact on the toy business and on video games than on Hollywood movies. Kids playing *Asteroids* and *Space Invaders* were living out the *Star Wars* experience. Despite its inventiveness, charm and excitement, *Star Wars* ushered in a puerile era of overblown epics for underfed minds. (These included many straight Arthurian romances, such as *Excalibur*, *Dragonslayer* and *The Sword and the Sorcerer*, that paralleled the *Dungeons and Dragons* craze.) Kids' stuff became so expensive and so profitable that it was hard to get any other kind of movie made. At a time when Hollywood had just begun to feel the influence of the European New Wave—with directors gingerly trying out more difficult styles and subjects—the new vogue of high-tech fantasy made adult moviemaking seem irrelevant. Small, cheap movies

with real scripts were a luxury the studios could no longer afford.

Funnies on film.

This was confirmed when Spielberg's *Close Encounters* came close to duplicating the success of *Star Wars* and later when Lucas' *The Empire Strikes Back* worked some improvements on its predecessor, including more advanced visual effects and a far less clunky script. Meanwhile, with *Superman* in 1978 and *Popeye* in 1980, the studios rediscovered comic-strip heroes as source-material for cartoony extravaganzas. There was something irresistibly amusing about these movies' ingenious attempts to stylize flesh-and-blood actors into pieces of pop iconography. The tongue-in-cheek humor of Margot Kidder's wide-eyed exchanges with Christopher Reeve in *Superman* was a way of twitting the myths while paying tribute to them.

Robert Altman was less fortunate when he assembled a townful of oafish clowns, clumsy acrobats and witless vaudevillians to represent the world of *Popeye's* Sweethaven. With creepy intuition, he cast the principal players almost too well, like animated figurines, and set them down in a shantytown in Malta that is too picturesque for words. Perhaps the most playful director not working today, Altman was simply too clever at thinking through the problem of doing a live-action animated cartoon, even holding back sure-fire touches like *Popeye's* spinach and the music of "I'm Popeye the Sailor Man" until the grand finale. After an unbearably mannered first half, *Popeye* gradually discovers the kind of simplicity and story-emphasis that such a movie needs.

No one would ever accuse Lucas or Spielberg of such an excess

of sophistication. But Spielberg's advantage over his friend is that his movies are partly set in the real world, not in some extragalactic fairyland. Between *The Sugarland Express* and *Close Encounters* he obviously learned how to work the humorous and human touches into the story itself to make it more credible. *Close Encounters* remains the most convincing and densely detailed movie Spielberg has made; it was certainly the mother-ship for *E.T.* and *Poltergeist*, which also deals with alien beings in ordinary suburban settings and center on the children (like Cary Guffy in *Close Encounters*) who make first contact with these creatures. Spielberg has been praised for his gentle social satire, but the suburban worlds of these movies strike me as dim, stereotyped and pretty much interchangeable. He loves suburbia too much to examine it closely and, despite broken homes and other modern problems, his vision of the nuclear family, presided over by loving guardians, is not far removed from *Father Knows Best*.

Grown up kids.

Still, Spielberg extracts stupendous performances from children and good ones from their parents as well. The funny yet feeling acting of the mother and father, played by Jobeth Williams and Craig T. Nelson, does much to hold *Poltergeist* together, just as the natural behavior of the kids, Henry Thomas and Drew Barrymore, anchors *E.T.* But the character Spielberg identifies with most is Roy Neary in *Close Encounters*, another grown-up kid whose growing obsession with UFOs disrupts his family and makes him break away to something beyond. Here *Grown-ups encroach upon the kids' world in Spielberg's E.T.*

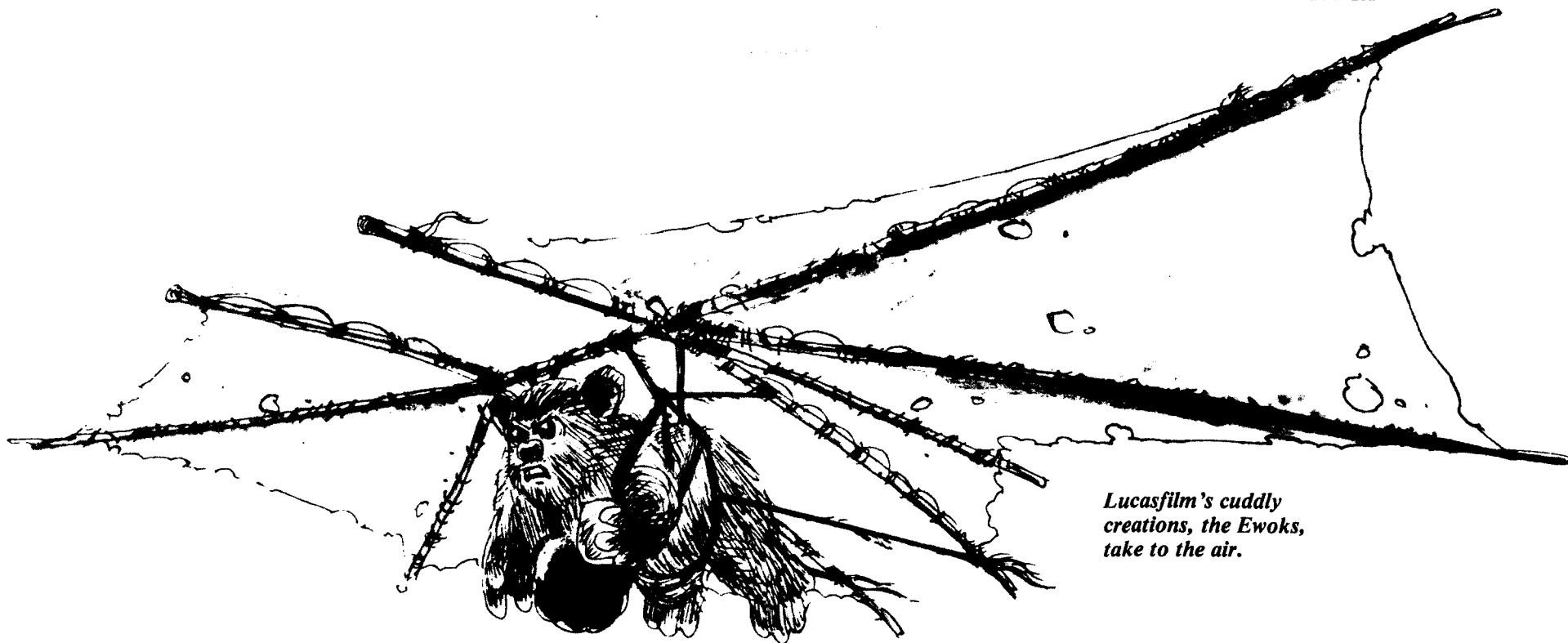
Spielberg may be commenting on a certain compulsive perfectionism in his own relation to movies that may make it difficult for him to live out the family life he eulogizes.

Whether this is the case or not, there's no doubt that the hyperactive Richard Dreyfuss, who played Roy Neary, was the perfect vehicle for Spielberg's brand of kinetic moviemaking. It sometimes seems like sheer busyness—an attempt to hook the audience by loading up the action and increasing the tempo, as in the first 10 minutes of *Close Encounters* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. But Dreyfuss' performance—his gradual breakdown, for example—takes on an emo-

tional shading and a depth of anguish extremely rare in Spielberg's rosy universe, where almost everything can be externalized or resolved by good will and strenuous effort. Even the aliens in *Close Encounters* and *E.T.* turn out to be friendly if not furry creatures, blending in perfectly with the stuffed toys in a middle-class child's big, crowded closet. Spielberg directs these machines with the same close attention he lavishes on the children.

For a science-fiction movie, deeply indebted to the paranoid classics of the '50s, *Close Encounters* (like *E.T.*) is an astonishingly benign work. *Star Wars* is all about Good and Evil: Darth Vader and the Empire





Lucasfilm's cuddly creations, the Ewoks, take to the air.

Return of the Jedi Sketch Book

says it all—Industrial Light and Magic.) There's a sweet romanticism to the film, in which the bad guys are all computerized and metal-encased, and the good guys have a happy relationship with nature—without, of course, giving up any of their access to high-tech terms of intergalactic adventure.

This is a movie not only made for kids but for "children of all ages," by boys who will always be boys. The smug macho that was present in the earlier two films rises to a crescendo here. The comic-book quality of the dialog (the script is by George Lucas and Lawrence Kasdan, author of the slam-bang *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) becomes a parody. The stylized daredevil cool of

don't hesitate to blow up a whole planet to show they mean business. In *Close Encounters* no one gets hurt. The men who disappeared decades ago return from space without having aged—a cardinal wish of all juvenile fantasy. (*Peter Pan* is subtitled "The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up.") Instead, they have had some kind of religious experience, reflected throughout the movie in the rapt expressions of all who have come into contact with the UFOs—Spielberg's version of "the force."

Francois Truffaut, who played the French scientist Lacombe, described afterward how difficult it was for the actors to be constantly gazing in wonderment at a blank spot just beyond the camera. Yet Spielberg has made this shot practically his signature; it's certainly the weakest element in *Close Encounters* and it leads directly to the feeble ending that undercuts the whole movie.

Wish upon a star.

In the "special edition" Spielberg recut in 1981, we actually see the inside of the alien mother-ship that will transport Roy Neary on his pilgrimage into space, and it looks like a garish Hyatt Hotel lobby, complete with oversized chandelier. As a blissed-out, idiotic grin spreads across the actor's face, we hear the melting strains of "When You Wish Upon a Star" on John Williams' soundtrack (a ludicrous touch that set early preview audiences tittering). The Disney side of Spielberg's sensibility tugs the movie into dreamy wish-fulfillment, abolishing the emotional complexity that preceded it.

It would surely be a mistake to see any real religiosity in Spielberg's imagination, though this was supposedly a key feature of Paul Schrader's discarded script for *Close Encounters*. And

Han and Lando's interchanges even have a faintly obscene quality, since they so uncritically play into a boy's adventure story version of warfare at a time when, at any hour of the day, you can find a demonstration going on somewhere on the globe protesting an arms buildup to oblivion.

A boy's world.

All the characters are boys, even the girls. Any feminist implications in the sturdy character of Princess Leia in *Star Wars* are gone by this time. She's become one of the boys, and even gets the Force. As a girl-doll version of Our Heroes, her racy costumes are more picturesque than erotic, and the perfunctory quality to her and Han's romance must put

the divine intervention at the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is straight out of Cecil B. DeMille, that live-action forerunner of Disney who pioneered in transposing the Divine Word onto celluloid.

Like George Lucas, Spielberg has the kind of '60s sensibility that makes it a virtue to be credulous, innocent and gullible. This is at the root of his feeling for children and his rapport with audiences. People love to be taken for a ride, even when they sense the shameless manipulation

Spielberg and Lucas mitigate anxieties felt in earlier science fiction by adding high tech to our fairy tales.

at work—the sentimentality, the coy humor, the echoes of other movies, the technical tricks and the hyperbole that turns every scene into the perfect essence of whatever it's supposed to be. There's not a dry eye in the house as Elliott tells the dying E.T., "I'll believe in you all my life, every day. I love you, E.T.," or at his departure when he points his long, crooked finger at Elliott's head—or is it his heart?—and says, "I'll be right here."

Celestial imagination.

After the moon shots and the space walks, it was probably inevitable that our imagination of outer space would begin to be

at ease all the preadolescents who hate "the goopy scenes." But as just another trusty buddy, she doesn't bring much contrast to a simplistic setup. As Carrie Fisher told the *L.A. Times* recently, reflecting on the fact that she was the only female character in the *Star Wars* movies, "They're like cowboys and Indians in space. Nobody cooks or sews. And aside from my hairdresser and a wardrobe woman, there were almost no women on the set. And you never see how Leia comes up with those hair styles."

The *Star Wars* trilogy hits some powerful mythic themes—patricide, the Christ legend, conflict of loyalty between family and state. It unashamedly makes Luke into a savior; in case you

domesticated. Spielberg and Lucas mitigate the deep-seated anxieties projected in earlier science fiction by assimilating it to fairy tales and adventure stories. Setting in motion the vast apparatus that goes into their movies, Spielberg and Lucas are like computer-age children playing games with state-of-the-art technology. In their work the trash culture of the '50s, which they grew up on, gets recycled through the Munchkin sensibility of the '60s by way of the big budgets and high-tech machinery of the '70s.

An important key to Spielberg's success is his acute visual sense, even if his facility with images sometimes works at cross-purposes to his generally benevolent vision. This was clear as early as *Duel*, his 1971 TV movie about a killer-truck that, for no apparent reason, stalks a car driven by a hapless Everyman, played by Dennis Weaver. Without ever showing us the driver of the truck, Spielberg uses an extraordinary range of tilted shots to make the vehicle seem demonically alive. He builds up a powerful sense of menace without stopping to explain. Eventually we feel he's cheating on us, coasting on his visual virtuosity to manipulate us.

Something similar happens in the opening scenes of *E.T.* when we get a series of terrifying waist-high views of the men who are hunting E.T., faceless behind their bobbing flashlights and jangling keys. Spielberg is already showing us the world from E.T.'s (and Elliott's) point of view, but the sense of menace is just for kicks; it has nothing to do with the movie. The false sense of danger recurs when men in space suits break in on all sides of Elliott's mother's house; they also turn out to be well-intentioned, as are nearly all figures of authority in Spielberg's world.

There's a limit to how much you can reduce mythic themes.

miss it he says in several crises, "I've got to save you!" The trilogy even has a classic message. Luke's job is to kill the Old Man within us, the devil that creates conflict and history, the force transgressing eternal peace. He's a restorer of that blissful time that has no history.

But who cares? There's a limit to how much you can reduce mythic themes until they turn in-

Sometimes Spielberg's stylized imagery works well. His warm backlighting makes us feel the security of Elliott's nest and lends a luminous glow to his communion with E.T.

Spielberg's kind of visceral filmmaking proceeds in terms of isolated scenes and effects. His visual shorthand, borrowed from older movies but accomplished through careful storyboarding, often plays havoc with story and continuity. In movies like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Spielberg aims directly at the gut in every scene. In a sense this is also a comic-strip movie, stuffed full of astonishing action bits, with two-dimensional characters larger than life but smaller than real. The same can be said of its explosive Australian counterpart, George Miller's *The Road Warrior*, with its blank-faced lachonic, Clint Eastwood-style hero, heart-stopping action sequences and cartoon-like cast of supporting characters. After looking into books like Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the director seems determined to give every arbitrary twist of plot an archetypal resonance. Even more than *Star Wars* and *Raiders*, this super-charged movie is like an illustrated lecture on heroes, villains and the mythology of adventure. *The Road Warrior* is staggeringly inept on any human level, but it may be the best action movie of recent years. Miller's self-consciousness, which can be fatal with pop material, doesn't paralyze him; his trashy sensibility feeds on it.

Not all the movies produced by the youth cult avoid credible human beings or center exclusively on a child's viewpoint. Many teenage pictures are simply raunchy and exploitative, but a few like last year's *Tex* and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* take

to Dr. Feelgood platitudes (wait till you see Luke telling Darth Vader to let go and express his feelings). We're all too busy anyway, watching fighters zip through hyperspace, little snowmobile-like sleds careen through a forest, and heroes and villains slash at each other with laser-swords. We know the story is winding up anyway. The conflict has been laid out so baldly, the characters are so sketchy, the tooling and molding of the film is so ponderous, that the power of mythifying just evaporates. What's left is mechanical thrill. *Jedi* successfully brings the *Star Wars* story to an end, but by the time you've fought that last battle with Our Heroes, you're glad you've arrived.

us right back to *American Graffiti*. These films have their poignancy and humor, but their soft-centered characters can be hazy and shallow. (Or else, like Matt Dillon in *Tex*, they look too pretty in a movie-star way.) And their problems are usually less than earth-shaking, even by the standards of adolescence. Occasionally a movie like *Diner* will appear, an American *I vitelloni*, to measure the distance between what we remember and who we are, between the aches of adolescence and the bittersweet discoveries of growing older. But what a rarity this is, when escapist fantasies are so much in demand that small-scale humor or honest recollection seems like self-indulgence.

Lucas and Spielberg have taught the movie studios how to give young audiences exactly what they want, and this has made the new Hollywood, with its slick production values, look more and more like the old one. By lovingly updating old movies—and even, in the case of *Raiders*, improving on them—they have recreated the split between European and American movies, between worldly sophistication and pop mythmaking, between art movies about grown-ups and popcorn fantasies about kids and muppets. Thanks to them Hollywood has undergone a collective regression, which should soon be flooding the market with *E.T.* and *Jedi* imitations. The fountain of youth has regenerated Hollywood commercially, but it will take a stronger elixir to revive its artistic conscience.

Morris Dickstein's movie criticism has appeared in the *Bennington Review*, *American Film*, *Partisan Review* and *The Nation*. He teaches at Queens College and is the author of *Saves the Day* and *Eden*.

Men

Continued from page 18

both wives and jobs to the '60s counterculture ideal of androgyny, the root impulse of the male revolt was to ease the constrictions in men's lives. But it was badly timed, as Ehrenreich shows. Its unfortunate side effect was to strand many women with neither breadwinner nor job equity in an economy that still functions according to the family wage system.

The family wage system—the principle that a man should be paid enough to support his family—had become a part of the American economy by the early years of the century. Its unstated corollary was that women didn't need to be paid—only enough to support themselves. If a woman worked, it was for pin money or to supplement a husband's or father's wages. Even when women did enter the workforce in large numbers after World War II, it was with the knowledge that their paychecks would buy them only a meager way of life. If a woman wanted prosperity—or motherhood without welfare—she'd have to find a breadwinner.

But new products of the post-war consumer economy erased much of women's productive work within the home, and some middle-class men had begun to question their functions as the economic drones of the nuclear family. The economic pact of marriage had become unequal: it was less and less a division of labor and increasingly one of labor and...shopping. "He makes the money and she spends it," as the still current saying goes.

Single and immature.

Ehrenreich's analysis of Herman Wouk's novel *Marjorie Morningstar* and Philip Roth's *When She Was Good* show that the '50s cult of "mature" manhood meant early marriage, wage-winning and fatherhood. Those men who resisted this ideology had to deal with the powerful bogeys of homosexuality and communism. Men who remained single were "immature" and by extension latently homosexual; while those who, like the Beats, questioned the work ethic were seen as anti-American.

Ehrenreich's force of insight is nowhere more on target than in

her assessment of the significance of *Playboy*. *Playboy* arrived on the scene in 1953 and succeeded in popularizing another way of life for male rebels. As the "party organ of a diffuse and swelling movement," in Ehrenreich's satirical phrase, *Playboy* had no interest in marriage or maturity. But it was unquestionably heterosexual and it certainly couldn't be accused of being "communist." *Playboy* wholeheartedly embraced American materialism, creating and legitimizing a new consumer identity for men: as the purchasers of stereo systems, cars and liquor, in place of those dull household appliances marriage required. The greening of the American man was on.

Next came his softening up: the transformation of the male image from one of strength to weakness. In the '60s, men who suffered from the male scourge of heart disease came to be seen as the victims of their own masculine personalities and ways of life. The heart-attack prone "Type A" personality is the classic upwardly driven male striver—tense, impatient, unfeeling. From there, via the human potential and health movements of the '70s, it was a short step to declaring that male mental health was in need of help also.

The New Right, which one would expect to be a bastion of faith in male toughness, has also adapted the new ideology of male weakness for its own ends: the salvaging of traditional marriage. In one of the last chapters, Ehrenreich takes apart the social theories of some right-wing theorists, most notably George Gilder's. Men, according to Gilder, are emotionally unstable—creatures of their own rampant sexual and aggressive impulses. Marriage alone civilizes them, diverting their destructive energies into more acceptable channels. Take away their wives, Gilder warns, and they'll shortly revert into barbarians.

Ehrenreich calls this psychology of the right an "attack" on men. But another reading is that it is a frantic attempt to shore up marriage's shaky balance by counterposing men's supposed emotional needs against women's economic dependency. The New Right worries, with apparent justification, that people won't marry unless they're afraid not to.

And here, where we look to Ehrenreich for an answer to the question of marriage, she closes

with a chapter—generous, rueful, angry—that is addressed to women and treats the end of marriage as a foregone conclusion, only hinting at what she thinks might replace it. She suggests that "binding pacts between the sexes" may no longer be possible or even desired, but she does not explain what a nonbinding pact is. She hopes that men will be "more than transients" in women's lives, but she doesn't explain exactly what "more than transient" means. Which is it to be, one wonders, marriage or "relationships?"

Sexual boredom.

This highlights a gap in the book: she never gets around to examining the changing ideology of marriage itself over the last 30 years. Although a chronicle of a rebellion, *The Hearts of Men* looks only partially at the nature of what is being challenged. We know male dissatisfactions with marriage extended well beyond the breadwinning role, but they are never detailed. What about sexual boredom, adultery, the claustrophobia of "togetherness" and the terror of permanence? Certainly novels of the '50s provide at least as much evidence for these as impetuses for male flight as does annoyance at women's "free ride." Perhaps because she is suspicious of the sexist applications of theories of emotional differences between men and women Ehrenreich has not addressed the question of whether men and women might want different kinds of lives and what feminist's response might be. As readers, we're left trying to align the parallels and disjunctions of what she concedes has often been a joint rebellion over the last 15 years.

Ehrenreich has taken on an analysis of social forces that are still spinning all around us. Her brilliant success in this short book is unquestioned, but one hopes at a later date she will take up in another book where this one leaves off. Penetrating, mordantly funny and generous, *The Hearts of Men* leaves a reader wishing it were even more ambitious than it is. With her eloquent and witty prose and dead bead on American society, Ehrenreich can afford to be audacious. ■

Carolyn Weaver is a freelance journalist who has written for Washington, D.C.'s City Paper, the Washington Post and the New York Times.

Ballet

Continued from page 19

In a recent article in the *New York Times Magazine*, Kirstein expounded the educational "theories" that help explain the abuses chronicled by Gordon:

"A ballet school is the most undemocratic thing there is, and there are three things [the kids] have to learn about this one. One is that there's no justice. The second is that they must never complain. The third is that they must shut up."

"This isn't the Royal Ballet School in England, where they all come away knowing how to play the piano and paint watercolors. Our kids are taught to have their brains in the feet. There may be one or two who've opened a book, but I've yet to meet them. Six hours a day on their feet—that's what they're here for."

Gordon's last chapter, "Finding Balance," offers her "new vision of ballet." Recording impressions of a visit to the Swedish

Ballet, she finds a model for ballet troupes in the U.S.: non-competitive atmosphere, the leeway permitted in physical type and the dancers' collective self-esteem.

However, only the Soviet Union trains dancers comparable in skill to Americans. Rather than looking to a company of minor distinction, Gordon might have examined the policies of Lenin-grad's Vaganova Choreographic Institute—training ground of such superstars as Nureyev, Baryshnikov and Makarova—to make her point that artistic excellence can be achieved without the struggle for existence that takes place in American schools.

Off Balance is must reading for ballet lovers and ballet parents. But it is more than a "ballet book." It raises an issue of public concern—the exploitation of thousands of teenage girls by the country's professional training schools—that only government regulation can halt. As Suzanne Gordon so eloquently shows, art is no apology for the ravishment of women's bodies, minds and self-esteem. ■

Lynn Garafola is writing a book on Diaghilev's Ballet Russes.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions** and **\$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Beth Maschnot**.

NATIONWIDE

June 16

"Does Military Spending Create Jobs?" NPR Call-In Special will focus on economic conversion and defense. Economists Klaus Mehrens (German conversion expert for IB Metall), Herbert Stein and Lester Thurow will debate and address questions for listeners who call collect (212) 279-3400 12-2 p.m. (EST). For more information call Erica Hunt, Institute for Labor Education and Research (212) 674-3322.

CHICAGO, IL

June 19

DSA Peace and Women's Branches sponsor Yvon Sui and Szulema Batodano, representatives of the Association of Nicaraguan Women—AM-ANDA Luisa Espinosa—in a discussion of the gains of Nicaraguan women after the revolution and the effects of U.S. sponsored intervention. Crosscurrents, 3206 N. Wilton, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

July 7

Physicians for Social Responsibility Chicago Chapter meeting. Rush Medical Center, 1750 W. Harrison, Room 1245-Jelke. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Bernice Bild, Ph.D. Coordinator of Illinois Weapons Freeze Campaign. She will give an update on the freeze campaign. For further information, please call (312) 726-8087.

OTTAWA, IL

June 25

Atomic Illinois Rally. Washington Park (Jackson and LaSalle). Noon-2 p.m. Featured guest speaker Harvey Wasserman, researcher and author of *Killing Our Own*, the story of the disaster of America's experience with atomic radiation. Followed by a car caravan to the LaSalle Nuclear Power Plant. For more information, contact the Citizens Against Nuclear Power, (312) 786-9041.

BIG SUR, CA

July 2-4

Hikes, campfires, songfests and socialist workshops are featured at

the California encampment of the Socialist Party USA. Tent out in redwoods by the river, own food, \$12 per adult. Workshops: Anti-militarism; Re-industrialization; The Italian Left; "E.T." Info: Socialist Party, 2404 W. 7th #202, L.A. 90057, (213) 467-8675.

DALLAS-FORT WORTH, TX

July 3-4

Walk from the Dallas Naval Air Station to Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth to commemorate Independence Day. The participants will also visit the Vought Corporation plant in Grand Prairie and the Bell Helicopter factory in Hurst in order to demand their conversion to socially productive uses. For more information, call Patricia Ridgely: (214) 375-3715.

PLAINFIELD, VT

July 15-August 5

Social Ecology Summer Program. The Institute for Social Ecology is resuming its program in social ecology in conjunction with Burlington College. The intensive 3 week residential summer program will explore five areas: ecological food production (agriculture and aquaculture), social theory, feminism and ecology, holistic health and nutrition, and alternative technology. Six college credits. For information write: Box 89, Plainfield, VT 05667. Or call Gloria, (603) 675-2230.

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ISRAEL

August 6-21

Third Annual Study Seminar in Israel. Unique opportunity to visit with Peace Now activists, community organizers, kibbutzniks, trade unionists, opposition members of Knesset, and explore "the other Israel." Two-week seminar co-sponsored by Chicago Friends of Peace Now and the Mordechai Anielewicz Circle of Americans for Progressive Israel. Designed for participants between 18 and 45. Total cost including airfare is \$950. Contact Roby Newman, Mordechai Anielewicz Circle, 150 Fifth Ave., Suite 1002, NYC 10011. (212) 989-2661.

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TEACHING STAFF from University of Massachusetts Economics Department. Sessions are July 10-16, July 31-August 6 and August 14-20 at Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass. The cost for a seven day session, for room, board and use of recreational facilities is \$220-440. Scholarships are available. Application deadline is June 25.

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Spies

Continued from page 19

logues and hysterical conversations:

She put her knuckles in her mouth and discovered she was weeping. He came and sat beside her on the bed, and she waited for him to put his arm around her or offer more wise arguments or simply take her, which was what she would have liked best, but he did nothing of the kind. He was content to let her mourn, until gradually she had the illusion that he had somehow caught her up, and they were mourning together. More than any words could have done, his silence seemed to mitigate what they had

to do. For an age, they stayed that way, side by side, till she allowed her choking to give way to a deep, exhausted sigh. But he still did not move—not towards her, not away from her.

"Jose," she whispered hopelessly, taking his hand once more. "Who the hell are you? What do you feel inside all those barbed wire entanglements?"

This is rubbish. Not only is it written at the level of pulp romance fiction, but it clearly disqualifies the girl for the role in which "Jose" (her pet name for the Mossad agent Joseph) is supposed to be molding her. (Another silly slip occurs at about this point. Charlie, who has earlier shown herself as a deft spouter of modish anti-Zionist propaganda, says that she has never heard of Deir Yassin.)

Perhaps half-aware of his cardboard or contradictory characters, and even of his extreme unfamiliarity with the region or the issues, Le Carre spends some time trying to set out the symbols and totems of the conflict. Here again, cliché lies in wait for him. The Israelis pay visits to the Holocaust museum at Yad Vashem, in order to strengthen their resolve. The Arabs get a bow in their direction with a description of what must be the hideous fortress-like Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron on the West Bank. A punchline is made out of the unsurprising fact that a Palestinian woman has a biochemistry degree from a U.S. university—something for everybody.

I was especially pleased to find, on page 328, the oldest and

stalest line of all; the one that appears in the first story of every journalist on his first trip to the region; the one that reads, "from crackling loudspeakers wailed the muezzin, summoning the faithful to prayer."

At only one point does Le Carre catch and sustain any really intriguing or vivid dialog or insight. The meeting between the Mossad and the British Secret Service is very well done and reminds one of how he got his reputation. The Brits are instinctive anti-Semites who have learned to "respect" Israeli cunning, and the Israelis are tough guys who expect nothing better from the gentiles who hunted them when Palestine was a British colonial mandate. But this is home ground for our author, and he obviously felt safer on it.

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Finally, I'm moved to protest at Le Carre's creation of Professor Minkel, the bumbling Israeli academic who protests at the maltreatment of Arabs and is, by what Le Carre no doubt considers an irony, made into a pawn of the Mossad. This is a poorly crafted caricature of Professor Israel Shahak, a man whose ceaseless work for human rights should not be cheapened in this way. Le Carre has used him lazily as the basis for an unconvincing figure, and then got bored and thrown him away. That, in effect, is what he has done here with the whole drama and struggle of the Middle East. ■
Christopher Hitchens, Washington correspondent of The Nation, writes the "American Notes" column for the London Times Literary Supplement.

CLASSIFIED

PUBLICATIONS

JUNE, JEWISH CURRENTS, Editorial, "A Test for Soviet Mideast Policy," Lloyd Motz, "Infeld and Oppenheimer: The Obstacles to Their Genius," Erica Silverman, "Jewish Lesbians vs. Invisibility," Rose Pastor Stokes' Memoirs, "From Poverty to Protest." Single copy postpaid \$1.50. Subscription \$10 USA. Jewish Currents Dept. T, 22 E. 17 St., NYC 10003.

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By Morris
Dickstein

RETURN OF THE JEDI
(see Pat Aufderhei-
de's review, page

20) is not only the third installment of George Lucas' *Star Wars* saga but the latest chapter in Hollywood's fabulously lucrative love affair with kids and adolescents who make up an ever larger share of the movie audience. Long before the *E.T.* bonanza, studios found that youngsters would keep going back to movies they liked, would spread the word and form cults around them, and gobble up millions of dollars worth of tie-in products from bubble gum and T-shirts to high-priced toys and video games. The toys in turn would make them want to see the movie again.

This was no great novelty except for the size of the take. The Disney studios had made money for decades by hooking up their moviemaking with a television series, comic books, theme parks, toys and momentary fads (like Davey Crockett's coonskin caps). The images of Disney's cartoon characters belonged to the permanent pantheon of pop culture, like Chaplin's tramp and Groucho's mustache and cigar. Yet for Disney the culture of childhood was still a separate realm of wishful fantasy, a never-neverland of the kind J.M. Barrie had conjured up in *Peter Pan*.

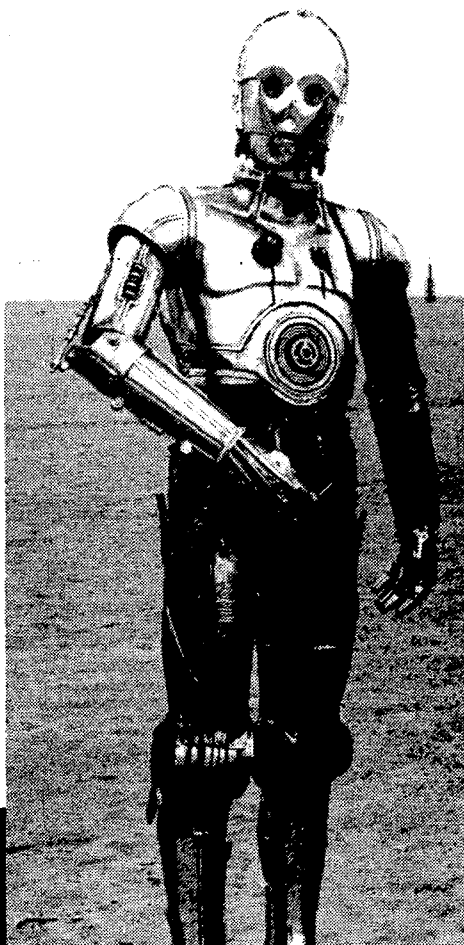
In the '70s, though, American movie-makers discovered they could lure grown-ups to these movies as well, just as pot-heads had turned out for revivals of Disney's *Fantasia*. At a time of economic troubles and international reversals, when many of our problems began to seem intractable, the audience was getting a little tired of sex and violence and bleak negative visions. Realism was out, sentimentality was in. Fantasy, adventure and fairy tales all suited this new escapist mood. The more hopeful, more trusting myths of childhood were alive but dorm-

ant in the minds of adults, waiting only to be tapped by the right formula. Even TV robots could be brought back to the movies by something clean, wholesome and upbeat—just the kind of positive thinking the old Hollywood had specialized in. Hadn't Frank Capra himself acclaimed *Rocky* for bringing heart back into moviemaking?

Celluloid rebellion

In the successful movies of the late '60s the young were shown as rebels or outlaws—gently unconventional in movies like *The Graduate* or *Alice's Restaurant*, or directly at war with society in *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Easy Rider*. But the youth movies cloned from *Easy Rider* failed at the box office, and so did several remarkably silly movies about campus revolutionaries. By the early '70s it became clear that the young themselves were less rebellious and audiences were ready for a

The new Hollywood's
looking at you, kid.



less trouble-making image of them.

Into this breach stepped George Lucas, a protege of Francis Ford Coppola who had grown up racing cars and chasing girls in Modesto, Calif.—far from Berkeley or Columbia, and before psychedelic drugs, unbuttoned sex and the Vietnam draft changed the very meaning of youth for many Americans. In *American Graffiti*, a surprise hit of 1973, Lucas turned his own nostalgia into a new staple of American pop culture. "Where were you in '62?" the ad campaign kept asking, and soon TV spin-offs like *Happy Days* began giving their own dumb answers. Even the rock'n'roll of the period, featured on the movie's soundtrack, enjoyed a new vogue and became a spearhead of the '50s revival.

The following year an even younger director, Steven Spielberg, released his first theatrical feature, *The Sugarland Express*, which contains in embryo nearly every movie he's made since. It looked like a couple-on-the-lam movie in the darkly fascinating tradition of *You Only Live Once*, *They Live By Night*, *Gun Crazy*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Getaway*. But *The Sugarland Express* introduced touches that took it far away from the mood of a *film noir*. Significantly, the whole plot revolved around a child. The pair of petty criminals (played by Goldie Hawn and William Atherton) who abduct a Texas state trooper are not so much trying to get away as to recover their baby from a foster family. Soon the tension of their battle with the police is deflated by countless bits of silly comedy, including auto pile-ups that anticipate Spielberg's biggest flop, *1941*. Their hostage, a green kid like themselves, gradually comes to identify with them. Along the way they become folk heroes and people start pressing food and flowers on them. The police betray them and one of them is finally killed, yet the film has something of a happy ending: the mother and child will be reunited.

Though made with a self-assurance remarkable for a 26-year-old filmmaker, *The Sugarland Express* never caught on with audiences. Its little jokes and asides retard the pace of the narrative. Its protagonists are too strident and unattractive; they lack emotional nuance and are hard to identify with. Perhaps the movie still had too much of a '60s kids-against-the-world theme. Yet at the same time it lacked grit and tension; Spielberg's vision was far too benign for the grimly romantic genre he was working in. In *Jaws*, a

year later, he let his kids get chewed up and showed us much of the carnage from the angle of the monster. But it was not until 1977 that Spielberg's and Lucas' kind of movie really came into its own and drastically changed the direction of Hollywood.

Star Wars and kid myths

When Lucas' *Star Wars* and Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* came out that year, they seemed to herald a big revival of science fiction, as *Jaws* and *The Exorcist* had pumped new life into the classic horror film. George Lucas was more precise in calling his movie a "space fantasy." Far from relying exclusively on



sci-fi, he had borrowed freely from Westerns, war movies, animated films, adventure serials and fairy tales, plundering the high spots and action bits from each of them.

"I researched kids' movies," he later said, "and how they work and how myths work." His homework done, he built his archetypal plot around the call and initiation of the young hero. The callow protagonist, Luke Skywalker, the spunky heroine, Princess Leia, the sage old Jedi knight, Obi-wan Kenobi, and his dark antagonist, Darth Vader, all come trailing clouds of Arthurian romance. Only a stunted juvenile mind would have taken Luke and Leia for credible imitations of full-fledged human beings (though *Jedi* concludes with a confrontation between Luke and his father, a rare moment of strong human interest). They were ciphers of chivalric legend and Hollywood cliché in futuristic drag. The mystical mythology of "the force," that tells Luke to "let go your conscious self," "act on instinct" and "stretch out your feelings," reeks of the wooliest self-help nostrums of the '60s. Yet kids everywhere loved the kind of imagination and humor that went into the 'droids (R2-D2,

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PETER

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